

# RECLAMATION

*Managing Water in the West*

## **Walker River Basin Acquisition Program EIS Scoping Report**



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Lahonton Basin Area Office  
Carson City, Nevada

**April 2008**

## **Mission Statements**

The mission of the Department of the Interior is to protect and provide access to our Nation's natural and cultural heritage and honor our trust responsibilities to Indian Tribes and our commitments to island communities.

The mission of the Bureau of Reclamation is to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public.

# Walker River Basin Acquisition Program EIS Scoping Report

*Prepared by*

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U.S. Department of the Interior  
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Lahonton Basin Area Office  
Carson City, Nevada

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
mg/l	milligrams per liter
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NOI	Notice of Intent
Pub.L.	Public Law
Reclamation	Bureau of Reclamation
Sec.	Section
TDS	total dissolved solids
WMAs	Wildlife Management Areas





# Chapter 1. Introduction

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) is preparing an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the proposed Walker River Basin Acquisition Program (Program). The Program is to purchase land, water appurtenant to the land, and related interests in the Walker River Basin, Nevada to provide additional flows to Walker Lake. Reclamation is the lead federal agency responsible for preparing the EIS in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Under NEPA scoping is an early and open public process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed by the EIS and for identifying the significant issues related to a proposed action. During the scoping phase of the Program, Reclamation sought input from the public, Tribes, and interested organizations and agencies. This scoping report documents the results of the scoping phase of this Program.

The scoping report was distributed to Cooperating Agencies for comment prior to releasing the report to the public. All comments were evaluated by Reclamation, and, after consideration, changes were made to the scoping report as deemed appropriate. Some of the comments reiterated input that had been provided previously; that input is listed and discussed in the scoping report. In this report, Reclamation explains its position and decisions on topics where there is disagreement (e.g., what the purpose and need should be and what alternatives should be considered). Reclamation is charged under NEPA with considering all comments received. Reclamation, as the lead federal agency, also has the ultimate responsibility for the decisions on the EIS contents. Reclamation's decisions during the development phase of the EIS are an iterative process and may change as the analysis progresses and additional evaluation of public and cooperating agency input occurs.

## 1.1 Purpose and Need Statement

When preparing an EIS, the lead federal agency must prepare a purpose and need statement per 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 1502.13. The requirements include “the statement shall briefly specify the underlying purpose and need to which the agency is responding in proposing the alternatives including the proposed action.” Reclamation Guidelines state the purpose and need statement is a

...critical element that sets the overall direction of the process and serves as an important screening criterion for determining which alternatives are reasonable. Reasonable is related to environmental, legal, financial and/or

technical criteria. All reasonable alternatives examined in detail must meet the defined Purpose and Need.

When shaping the purpose and need statement, Reclamation will consider authorizations that exist for the action and the legal constraints that limit the action.

### **1.1.1 Background**

The declining water level at Walker Lake is a direct response to reduced inflow to the lake, and the effects are well documented. Over the past 124 years, decreases in freshwater inflow have resulted in a 145-foot drop in the lake's surface elevation and a corresponding reduction in volume of nearly 80%<sup>1</sup>. This decline has resulted in a corresponding increase in total dissolved solids (TDS) from approximately 2,500 milligrams per liter (mg/l) in 1882 to more than 15,000 mg/l today. While the amount of inflow necessary to reverse the decline and stabilize the lake has been debated, the effects of the declining lake level on water quality and the ecology of the lake are well understood. In the past several years, Congress has passed three pieces of legislation that include portions directly related to this issue.

These three pieces of legislation are Public Law (Pub. L.) 107-171 Section (Sec.) 2507, Pub. L. 108-7 Sec. 207, and Pub. L. 109-103 Sec. 208. In summary:

- Pub. L. 107-171 Sec. 2507 provided \$200,000,000 to Reclamation to provide water to at-risk natural desert terminal lakes, with the provision that the funds not be spent to purchase or lease water rights;
- Pub. L. 108-7 Sec. 207 clarified that the money provided in Pub. L. 107-171 could only be used for Pyramid, Summit, and Walker Lakes in Nevada; and
- Pub. L. 109-103 Sec. 208 which, among other direction, provided not more than \$70,000,000 of the funding from Pub. L. 107-171 to the University of Nevada to acquire from willing sellers land, water appurtenant to the land, and related interests in the Walker River Basin, Nevada, and to establish and administer an agricultural and natural resources research center. The legislation further provided that the university would make acquisitions that were most beneficial to establishment and operation of the natural resources research center and to environmental restoration in the Walker River Basin.

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<sup>1</sup> The Walker Basin, Nevada and California: Physical Environment, Hydrology, and Biology, Sharpe et. al., Desert Research Institute Publication No. 41231, (2007) pp. 14–38.

These three pieces of legislation, together with the deteriorated environment of Walker Lake, provide the foundation for the purpose and need statement for the EIS. Taken together, the three pieces of legislation give direction to provide water to Walker Lake. Pub. L. 109-103 relies on the funding provided in Pub. L. 107-171 and gives additional direction by removing the prohibition on purchasing or leasing water rights.

### **1.1.2 Purpose and Need Statement (provided at scoping meetings with modifications as noted below)**

The purpose of the Program is to provide water to Walker Lake, an at-risk natural desert terminal lake in Nevada, by acquiring, from willing sellers, land, water appurtenant to the land, and related interests in the Walker River Basin in Nevada and to make acquisitions that are the most beneficial to environmental restoration in the Walker River Basin. The Acquisition Program is needed to implement section 208(a) of Pub. L. 109-103 in accordance with Sec. 2507 of Pub. L. 101-171 (as amended) and Sec. 207(a)(1) of Pub. L. 108-7.

*Modifications:* As directed in the legislation, the words “in Nevada” were added to identify where the acquisitions are to occur. Acquisition of California water rights will be considered in the document when those water rights are appurtenant to lands in Nevada (e.g., stored water that is used on and appurtenant to lands in Nevada). The last sentence in the purpose and need statement provided at the scoping meetings has been removed because it is repetitive of what the first sentence implies. The removed sentence was “and to begin the process of restoring Walker Lake to a sustainable condition of ecological health through provision of increased freshwater inflows.”



## **Chapter 2. Public Scoping Outreach Activities**

Public scoping outreach activities included publication of a Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register, press releases, and paid advertisements announcing public scoping meetings, as well as publication of Program information on the Reclamation website. Four public scoping meetings were held. A mailing list of interested parties was created and is continually updated; information on the EIS is sent to this mailing list. Several entities listed in Section 2.6 of this report were also asked to become cooperating agencies to assist in preparation of the EIS. These outreach activities are described in the following sections.

### **2.1 Noticing**

Reclamation used a number of avenues to notice its intent to begin preparing an EIS pursuant NEPA and provide information to the public regarding scoping and other outreach activities. The NOI, press releases, and advertisements were all published on Reclamation's Mid-Pacific Region Public Affairs website, at <http://www.usbr.gov/newsroom/newsrelease/index.cfm>. Below is a description of the noticing activities.

#### **2.1.1 Notice of Intent**

The formal scoping period for the general public began on September 18, 2007, with the publication of the NOI in the Federal Register. The NOI (Appendix A) notified the public of Reclamation's intent to begin the EIS process, provided Program information and the dates and locations for the public scoping meetings, and solicited public comments. The NOI indicated the Program was proposed by Reclamation for purposes of complying with the requirements of Public Law 107-171 (Desert Terminal Lakes Program) and Public Law 109-103. The NOI stated that public scoping comments should be sent no later than November 26, 2007 (30 days following the final public scoping meeting). This public comment deadline was extended to include comments received through December 10, 2007.

#### **2.1.2 Press Releases, Paid Advertisements, and Mailings**

Reclamation developed press releases to announce the EIS, solicit public participation, and invite the public to the public scoping meetings (Appendix A). Three press releases were sent to Reclamation's media list.

Paid advertisements to provide information on the Program, its status, and the public scoping meetings were placed in media outlets covering those audiences affiliated with the various scoping meeting locations. The public ads announced the logistical details and locations of the public scoping meetings and solicited participation in the scoping process (Appendix A).

In addition, numerous public agencies and other potentially interested parties were notified by written correspondence of the public meetings. An informational mailing with clarifications on the EIS and notification of extension of the scoping comment period was mailed to the EIS mailing list of interested parties (Appendix A). These mailings were also sent to the Walker River Paiute Tribe, Yerington Paiute Tribe, and Bridgeport Indian Colony.

## 2.2 Public Scoping Meetings

Reclamation held four public scoping meetings to solicit comments, issues and concerns about the Program from the public. The meetings were scheduled as follows:

### Nevada

- Reno, Monday, Oct. 22, 2007, from 6 to 8 p.m., Rancho San Rafael Park, Main Ranch House, 1595 N. Sierra Street
- Yerington, Tuesday, Oct. 23, 2007, from 6 to 8 p.m., Yerington High School Gymnasium, 114 Pearl Street
- Hawthorne, Wednesday, Oct. 24, 2007, from 6 to 8 p.m., Mineral County Public Library, meeting room 110, 1st Street

### California

- Bridgeport, Thursday, Oct. 25, 2007, from 6 to 8 p.m., Bridgeport Memorial Hall, 73 N. School Street

Each public scoping meeting was in an open house format. Attendees signed in at the door and were encouraged to review 10 EIS informational posters (Appendix B) and 8 information handouts (Appendix B), ask questions, and make comments. Representatives from Reclamation, Jones & Stokes (Reclamation's EIS consultant), and the University of Nevada were present to answer questions. Comment cards were available for attendees to provide comments. Easel note pads, on which meeting attendees could record comments, were available during the meetings.

The Yerington meeting had the largest number of attendees, with 117. The Reno meeting was attended by 20, the Hawthorne meeting was attended by 11, and the

Bridgeport meeting was attended by 9. These counts reflect only those attendees that elected to sign-in.

## 2.3 Cooperating Agencies

The lead federal agency preparing a NEPA document (e.g., an EIS) may request federal agencies and nonfederal agencies such as Tribes, local governmental entities or state agencies to be a cooperating agency. The criterion for being a cooperating agency is “jurisdiction by law or special expertise” concerning the proposed action. This includes special expertise with respect to an environmental issue.

The term *cooperating agency* is from the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations; it does not imply that any of the Cooperating Agencies are supporting the proposed action (Acquisition Program). Rather, these agencies and tribes have special expertise or legal jurisdiction to assist with development of the EIS for things such as identifying impacts of the proposed action.

According to CEQ regulations:

(a) The lead agency shall:

1. Request the participation of each cooperating agency in the NEPA process at the earliest possible time.
2. Use the environmental analysis and proposals of cooperating agencies with jurisdiction by law or special expertise, to the maximum extent possible consistent with its responsibility as lead agency.
3. Meet with a cooperating agency at the latter's request.

(b) Each cooperating agency shall:

1. Participate in the NEPA process at the earliest possible time.
2. Participate in the scoping process
3. Assume on request of the lead agency responsibility for developing information and preparing environmental analyses including portions of the environmental impact statement concerning which the cooperating agency has special expertise.
4. Make available staff support at the lead agency's request to enhance the latter's interdisciplinary capability.
5. Normally use its own funds. The lead agency shall, to the extent available funds permit, fund those major activities or analyses it

requests from cooperating agencies. Potential lead agencies shall include such funding requirements in their budget requests.

- (c) A cooperating agency may in response to a lead agency's request for assistance in preparing the environmental impact statement reply that other program commitments preclude any involvement or the degree of involvement requested in the action that is the subject of the environmental impact statement. A copy of this reply shall be submitted to the Council on Environmental Quality.

The following entities were invited to participate in preparation of the EIS as cooperating agencies.

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)
- Bureau of Land Management
- University of Nevada
- Mineral County
- Lyon County
- Walker River Paiute Tribe
- Yerington Paiute Tribe
- Bridgeport Indian Colony
- Walker River Irrigation District
- Mason Valley Conservation District
- Smith Valley Conservation District
- Nevada Department of Wildlife
- Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
- U.S. Board of Water Commissioners<sup>2</sup>

Of these, the Bureau of Land Management, the Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and the U.S. Board of Water Commissioners declined the offer to become a cooperating agency, and the Bridgeport Indian Colony did not respond. All other entities invited to become cooperating agencies have accepted. All correspondence regarding cooperating agency status is included as Appendices C and D.

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<sup>2</sup> Hunt Decarlo, Caryn. Bureau of Reclamation. March 2008—Personal communication.



## **2.4 Native American Tribal Consultation**

Tribal consultation is required during the NEPA process when a federally recognized tribe may be affected by the proposed action. On September 12, 2007, Reclamation sent letters to representatives of the Bridgeport Indian Colony, the Yerington Paiute Tribe, and the Walker River Paiute Tribe to initiate consultation because they may be affected by the Program. Tribal consultation letters are included in Appendix D.

On December 7, 2007, Reclamation met with the Walker River Paiute Tribe to discuss the EIS; representatives of the BIA also attended the meeting. Reclamation described the EIS process, the public involvement process, and discussed to what extent the Tribe would like to participate in the EIS process. The Tribe and BIA accepted the invitation to become cooperating agencies, and indicated that they will provide information during the process by providing information on the operations of Weber Dam; fish and wildlife information for fish species on the reservation, in Walker River, and in Walker Lake; and various economic and cultural resource issues. BIA's presence at this meeting is indicative of the close cooperation between the Tribes, BIA, and Reclamation. However, Reclamation is conducting Tribal consultation independently of BIA.

The Yerington Paiute Tribe also accepted the invitation to be a cooperating agency.



## Chapter 3. Scoping Results

### 3.1 Methods for Comment Collection and Analysis

Reclamation collected comments, questions, and concerns about the Program through public scoping meetings, cooperating agencies meetings, letters, facsimiles, and e-mails. Written comments were encouraged by providing comment cards at each public meeting. All written comments were read and evaluated to determine specific issues or concerns. To date, Reclamation has received more than 200 comments regarding the scope of the EIS. There were also a number of specific alternatives recommended. All of the comments received are included in Appendix E and at [http://www.usbr.gov/mp/lbao/desert\\_terminal/index.html](http://www.usbr.gov/mp/lbao/desert_terminal/index.html). Below is a summary of the comments, issues and concerns, and recommended alternatives.

### 3.2 Summary of Scoping Comments by Subject

Comments that are received during the public scoping period, and from cooperating agencies and tribes, are used to discern the predominant issues to be analyzed in the EIS, as well as to identify reasonable alternatives to the proposed action (40 CFR § 1501.7).

#### 3.2.1 Summary of Issues Raised in Comments

Comments received covered a wide range of topics including suggested impacts to assess in the EIS, suggested alternatives to the proposed action, sources of information for assessing impacts, statutory authority, and whether those who commented were in support of the goal of the program. The following issues provided during the scoping process will be used to establish the breadth of the analysis in the EIS.

- **Groundwater Impacts**—issues related to recharge and losses from additional stream flow, lack of recharge as a consequence of removing water from currently irrigated lands, and lack of recharge in currently used delivery canals when water is removed. These issues relate to availability of water for domestic users and farmers reliant on groundwater, already lowered water tables causing additional loss of transferred water, and impact on the environment along unused delivery systems.
- **Economic Impacts**—comments received on economic impacts varied from the impacts of decreasing agricultural production in the Smith and

Mason Valleys to the impacts to communities around Walker Lake from not taking action that would provide water to the lake. Issues regarding impacts to agriculture varied; however, the bulk of the comments asked that impacts that accrue to the Mason and Smith Valleys communities as a whole also be addressed. These impacts included agricultural production as a whole, farm labor, farm equipment and related maintenance businesses, fuel businesses, power service businesses, seed and fertilizer businesses, grocery stores, other service-based businesses, county tax revenues, and community services like police and fire protection. Comments were also provided regarding economic impacts on communities that rely on Walker Lake and the taxes and revenues generated from tourism and recreation that will be lost if additional flows are not provided to the lake.

- **Ability of Program to Meet Goals**—many comments and questions regarding the usefulness of providing water to a desert terminal lake were received. The bulk of these issues pertained to the quantity of water needed to restore Walker Lake, what will happen to the acquired water if the program is not successful, what assurances are in place to ensure the acquired water makes it to Walker Lake once it is transferred, who will own and maintain the acquired water, and whether the water be legally transferred under Nevada Water Law. Concerns regarding the ability of the program to account for acquired water under the existing management and water accounting structure were raised. Concerns were also raised about whether short-term leasing would be “most beneficial” in comparison to the permanent acquisition of water rights.
- **Physical Environment Issues in Mason and Smith Valleys and in Lyon County**—comments identified issues of increased dust and its control, increased noxious weeds, loss of wildlife habitat for wildlife using agricultural fields and irrigation ditches, water quality impacts due to lowering groundwater tables, sedimentation rates and changes in channel geomorphology, changes in delivered volumes of water because of changes to number of users on a particular ditch system, changes in riparian vegetation densities and distribution, changes in hydrology and water resources, and effects of global warming on future water availability.
- **Physical Environment Issues near Walker Lake and in Mineral County**—comments identified issues related to fish in the Walker River and Walker Lake, migratory waterfowl that depend on Walker Lake, worsening conditions from windblown dust at Walker Lake as the lake level decreases, and worsening water quality from the continued decline of Walker Lake. Comments were also received regarding the impacts that might occur in California if the distribution of water rights were changed.
- **Statutory Authority**—comments received regarding statutory authority focused on the need to address all Desert Terminal Lakes legislation as

amended in a more comprehensive manner. This included analyzing all of Pub. L. 109-103 Sec. 208, rather than just the acquisition program, including establishment and operation of an agricultural and natural resource center. In addition, comments asked that Reclamation clarify who is in charge of the program and the relation to NEPA. Additional comments asked that Reclamation define environmental restoration as included in Pub. L. 109-103, development of the purpose and need statement, and authority for water only acquisitions versus land and water acquisitions.

### **3.2.2 Summary of Actions and Alternatives Suggested for Analysis in the EIS**

One of the major reasons for conducting scoping meetings and inviting comments is to develop alternatives to the proposed action. NEPA requires that the EIS consider the proposed action, no action (not implementing any alternatives), and reasonable alternatives to the proposed action.<sup>3</sup> Reclamation used the public scoping meetings to help identify alternatives, which will be subject to screening criteria to formulate a range of reasonable alternatives. Cooperating agencies and Tribes may also have specific knowledge of elements to be included in alternatives and were asked to contribute to this process. In addition, some alternatives provided during scoping were incomplete and may need to be further defined by Reclamation to be complete EIS alternatives. Suggested actions to be considered for inclusion in alternatives from public comment include:

- Import groundwater from other basins (e.g., Whiskey Flats, Rawhide Flats)
- Import surface water (e.g., Cottonwood Canyon)
- Use wastewater effluent
- Use geothermal effluent
- Use of mining effluent
- Upstream water leasing
- Include water acquisitions from Hawthorne Naval Ammunition Depot
- Acquire water rights in the Hawthorne area only
- Allow private purchase

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<sup>3</sup> 40 CFR § 1502.14 requires that an agency explore all reasonable alternatives to a proposed project and describe those reasonable alternatives in the EIS at a level that will provide the decision maker with clear choices regarding environmental impacts. The EIS must address environmental impacts of the proposed action, no action, and reasonable alternatives to the proposed action. Alternatives do not need to be authorized beforehand, nor within the lead agencies jurisdiction, yet must address the need for the action.

- Include willing sellers in all communities in the Walker River Basin (include California water)
- Use the lease/water bank alternative (WRID)
- Use a water leasing/banking (including basinwide program)
- Rotate fields and let fallow every 7 years
- Develop a water market using a local/state/water contractors partnership to enhance management of water
- Mandate two federal water masters rather than one and locate in an office other than WRID
- Develop reservoirs for capturing flood event flows for future use
- Define restoration as water for Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and wetlands
- Conserve water
- Upgrade delivery system to prevent loss to groundwater
- Restore channel to increase river efficiency
- Enforce and monitor all water diversions and wells and provide saved water to Walker Lake
- Install a dike across a portion of lake to create a salinity barrier
- Cement the riverbed
- Mandate that farmers who will not share water live at Walker Lake for 4 years
- Declare emergency status for addressing level of Walker Lake
- Exclude bed and banks from going back to Walker River Paiute Tribe
- Oxygenate Walker Lake
- Add pipeline to Las Vegas and reduce lake level
- Create outlet to lake so lake can clean itself
- Use desalination
- Use cloud seeding
- Mandate that Walker River Paiute Tribe share water

### **3.2.3 Additional Public Comments**

There were numerous comments received regarding the opinions of individuals and whether they were in agreement with the objectives of the proposed action, the likelihood and desirability of saving Walker Lake, and the existence of

possible hidden agendas for the use of the water once it is acquired. Although these comments served to highlight the controversial nature of the proposed action and help to identify the social climate for implementing certain actions, they did not provide issues or alternatives for development of the EIS. These opinions will be generally analyzed under the EIS No Action Alternative (not implementing an Acquisition Program or other EIS action alternatives).

### 3.3 Cooperating Agencies Meeting

On January 31, 2008, Reclamation hosted a meeting with the cooperating agencies to discuss roles and responsibilities, review public scoping to date, and discuss identified issues and potential alternatives to the proposed action. Reclamation also met with Lyon County on March 4, 2008, and with the Smith Valley Conservation District on March 26, 2008. Below is a brief summary of the meetings, including discussions regarding alternative screening.

#### 3.3.1 Selection and Role of a Cooperating Agency

Per CEQ guidance, Reclamation sought to include state, local, and federal agencies with specific knowledge by law or special expertise in development of the EIS. As described in Section 2.6, several entities were invited to participate, and many of those invited accepted the role of cooperating agency. The table below provides a brief description of some of the information and expertise that Reclamation anticipates these cooperating agencies will provide. It is important to note that becoming a cooperating agency does not require an agency to embrace the need for the Program or support its implementation; a cooperating agency's role is to assist Reclamation in preparing specific information regarding the alternatives to ensure a complete and accurate analysis of impacts, both beneficial and adverse, are described in the EIS.

#### *Cooperating Agencies and Roles*

<b>Cooperating Agency</b>	<b>Jurisdiction or Special Expertise (As Identified by Reclamation)</b>
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Endangered Species Act Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act North American Migratory Bird Treaty Act Lahontan cutthroat trout restoration programs Listed and nonlisted species and their habitats Invasive nonnative species eradication Walker River riparian restoration

<b>Cooperating Agency</b>	<b>Jurisdiction or Special Expertise (As Identified by Reclamation)</b>
Bureau of Indian Affairs	Operations of Weber Dam Tribal water delivery and management
University of Nevada	Economic and environmental research Development of the proposed action (Acquisition Program)
Mineral County	Economic impacts Local ordinances Community information
Lyon County	Economic impacts Local ordinances Community information
Walker River Paiute Tribe	Indian Trust resources Tribal irrigation and water management Tribal ordinance River and lake hydrology Cultural resources
Yerington Paiute Tribe	Indian Trust resources Tribal irrigation and water management Tribal ordinance Cultural resources Mason Valley water quality issues
Walker River Irrigation District	Water distribution systems Water rights Water leasing and banking alternative
Mason Valley Conservation District	River restoration Agronomic conservation practices Soil conservation practices Irrigation systems
Nevada Department of Wildlife	North American Migratory Bird Treaty Act Lahontan cutthroat trout restoration programs Wildlife species and their habitats Walker River riparian restoration



### **3.3.2 Review Purpose and Need**

Reclamation provided the cooperating agencies with a discussion of the purpose and need for the Program (presented in Section 1.1 above). The discussion focused on the types of alternatives suggested during scoping that might meet the purpose and need. The discussion focused on the need to satisfy Sec. 208 of Pub. L. 109-103, or more specifically the provision that provided \$70,000,000 to the University of Nevada for an acquisition program. The focus of the EIS will be to look at various alternatives that can meet the purpose and need to acquire land, water appurtenant to the land, and related interests from willing sellers to provide water for Walker Lake.

### **3.3.3 Review Scoping Comments**

The cooperating agencies were provided with a summary of the issues and suggested alternatives from the scoping comments (as listed in Section 3.2) and discussed how these comments would be incorporated into the EIS process. Each of the comments was reviewed, and specific comments were categorized based on the issue being raised or the impact that needed to be addressed; alternatives were provided separately. Discussion of the comments focused on the basic categories, and each cooperating agency was asked to review the list and provide specific comments regarding additional issues or alternatives that may have been overlooked or that were not offered. The cooperating agencies were also asked to provide information on issues or impacts that they have specific knowledge of or special expertise in to assist Reclamation in developing the EIS.

### **3.3.4 Alternatives Discussion**

The list of actions to be considered for inclusion in alternatives to the proposed action that was compiled during public scoping was shared with the cooperating agencies. Additionally, a first cut of what actions could be further developed into alternatives that met the purpose and need and might be carried forward in the EIS for further analysis and also which alternatives did not meet the purpose and need were discussed. The discussion focused on the basic tenet that the actions/alternatives would need to meet the purpose and need, specifically the action/alternative would need to provide water to Walker Lake through an acquisition alternative. Actions/alternatives were categorized as identified below.

#### **3.3.4.1 *Actions/Alternatives Considered for Elimination***

The following actions/alternatives were considered for elimination from detailed analysis in the EIS:

- Install a dike across a portion of the lake to create a salinity barrier
- Cement the riverbed
- Declare emergency status for addressing level of Walker Lake

- Oxygenate Walker Lake
- Add pipeline to Las Vegas and reduce lake level
- Create outlet to lake so lake can clean itself
- Use desalination
- Allow private purchase
- Mandate that Walker River Paiute Tribe share water
- Import groundwater from other basin (e.g., Whiskey Flats, Rawhide Flats)
- Import surface water from the Pacific Northwest
- Define restoration as water for WMAs and wetlands
- Mandate that farmers who will not share water live at Walker Lake for 4 years
- Exclude bed and banks from going back to Walker River Paiute Tribe
- Use cloud seeding
- Develop reservoirs for capturing flood event flows for future use
- Mandate two federal water masters rather than one and locate in an office other than WRID
- Include willing sellers in all communities in the Walker River Basin (include California water)
- Restore channel to increase river efficiency

The actions/alternatives listed above were identified for consideration of elimination from detailed analysis in the EIS because they do not meet the purpose and need of the EIS and are not considered to be reasonable for environmental, legal, financial, or technical reasons.

For example, suggested actions such as mandating a certain group to provide water to the lake does not constitute a willing seller program as identified in the purpose and need. Likewise, mandating acquisitions in a specific basin would be in conflict with a willing seller program. Other actions that include reconfiguring the lake, draining the lake, or desalinating lake water do not provide water to the lake as required in the purpose and need statement. Other actions that suggest importing water from other basins do not meet the direction in the legislation to work within the Walker River Basin.

Cloud seeding was also suggested in several comment letters. Cloud seeding is already occurring extensively in the basin and is controlled by various rules that are instituted to ensure that cloud seeding is not performed when it might exacerbate the potential for flooding. While cloud seeding may have the potential to increase water availability overall, it would likely provide water to increase

allocations to junior water right holders. It does not meet the purpose and need of acquisitions to provide water to the lake unless it was guaranteed the water right holders would be willing sellers.

### **3.3.4.2      *Actions/Alternatives Considered for Further Scrutiny***

The remaining actions/alternatives listed below appear to meet the purpose and need and will be further screened for consideration in the EIS. These actions may be grouped to form whole alternatives or may be subdivided into various iterations.

- Lease upstream water
- Use lease/water bank alternative (WRID)
- Use a water leasing/banking (including basinwide program)
- Rotate fields and fallow every 7 years and provide conserved water to Walker Lake
- Develop a water market using a local/state/water contractors partnership to enhance management of water
- Conserve water
- Upgrade delivery system to prevent loss to groundwater
- Use wastewater effluent
- Use geothermal effluent
- Use mining effluent and mine remediation effluent
- Include water from Hawthorne Naval Ammunition Depot
- Acquire water rights in the Hawthorne area only
- Enforce and monitor all water diversions and wells and provide saved water to Walker Lake
- When looking at what water to buy, consider buying water that would benefit a wide variety of resources in addition to the lake. For example, look at acquiring water rights from marginal farmland.

There was extensive discussion of the remaining actions and how they might be formulated into whole alternatives in the Program (the proposed action). The university's program currently considers leasing as a form of purchase and is entertaining leasing proposals from willing sellers. The discussions focused on various possibilities for alternatives. These ideas included a banking and leasing alternative that would be provided by WRID; the alternative would also need to be crafted to meet the purpose and need (e.g., acquisitions of leases in Nevada only). Another idea was to explore an alternative that would be made up of on-farm conservation and water management improvements that could make water

available for purchase and subsequent movement to Walker Lake. These ideas will be further developed during the alternatives development process.

## Chapter 4. Alternatives Development

The heart of the EIS, according to the CEQ, is the discussion and comparison of impacts from various alternatives. 40 CFR § 1502.14 requires that an agency explore all reasonable alternatives to a proposed project and describe those reasonable alternatives in the EIS at a level that will provide the decision maker with clear choices regarding environmental impacts (including social and economic impacts). The EIS must address environmental impacts of the proposed action, no action, and reasonable alternatives to the proposed action. Alternatives do not need to be authorized by law or within the lead agency's jurisdiction, yet the alternatives must address the need for the action. The evaluation of alternatives is governed by the rule of reason that requires a draft EIS to consider a range of alternatives that could accomplish the purpose and need.

The proposed action to be analyzed in this EIS is for Reclamation to provide funding to the University of Nevada to provide water to Walker Lake by acquiring land, water appurtenant to land, and related interests from willing sellers in the Walker River Basin in Nevada. The no action alternative (not implementing an Acquisition Program or other EIS action alternatives) will also be analyzed.

Other alternatives considered in detail in the EIS must also meet the purpose and need. The alternatives and actions that were provided by the public that meet the purpose and need, and were discussed with the cooperating agencies, will be formulated into fully developed alternatives to comply with NEPA. Ultimately, the alternatives must provide the basis for rigorous analysis in the EIS to allow distinct comparisons for decision makers. Once alternatives are further developed, they will be compared based on efficiency, effectiveness, completeness, and acceptability as follows:

- The efficiency of the alternative in meeting the purpose and need
- The effectiveness of the alternative in alleviating identified problems
- The completeness of the alternative, or how many other actions would have to occur to implement the alternative
- The legal acceptability of the alternative.

Alternatives determined to be viable under these criteria will be analyzed in greater detail during the EIS process. Alternatives will be shared with the public once they have been formulated with the cooperating agencies.



## **Chapter 5. Summary of Future Actions**

Once alternatives have been developed, Reclamation will share them with the public at informational meetings. At these meetings, the alternatives will be presented and explained, with a question and answer session to follow. These meetings are tentatively scheduled to be held in late May and will be advertised, and the mailing list of interested parties will be notified. In addition, the Tribes will be included in the public process, as well as consulted with separately by Reclamation per their status as Tribes.

Following public input, the impacts of implementing action alternatives and no action will then be evaluated during the EIS process. Impacts of the proposed action and alternatives will be compared to no action.

Once Reclamation has completed its preliminary analysis of the action alternatives and no action alternative, it will prepare a draft EIS documenting this analysis for public review and comment. There will be a 60-day comment period and public hearings to solicit comment. The Draft EIS is tentatively scheduled to be published in late 2008.

Once the public comment period on the draft EIS has concluded, Reclamation will consider and respond to all comments and oral testimony and prepare a Final EIS. Reclamation will consider all written comments and oral testimony in deciding which alternative to select and implement and document that selection in a Record of Decision, no sooner than 30 days following publication of the Final EIS, tentatively scheduled to be completed in fall 2009.





## **Appendix A—Notice of Intent, Press Releases, Paid Advertisements, and Mailings**



date of publication of this notice. If the authorized officer determines that a public meeting will be held, a notice of the time and place will be published in the **Federal Register** at least 30 days before the scheduled date of the meeting.

(Authority: 43 CFR 2310.3-1)

**Kent Hoffman,**

*Deputy State Director, Lands and Minerals.*

[FR Doc. E7-18890 Filed 9-24-07; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 6450-01-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### National Park Service

#### Winter Use Plans, Final Environmental Impact Statement, Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks and the John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Memorial Parkway, Wyoming

**AGENCY:** National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of Availability of the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Winter Use Plans, Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks and the John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Memorial Parkway.

**SUMMARY:** Pursuant to National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, 42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(C), the National Park Service announces the availability of a Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Winter Use Plans, Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks and the John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Memorial Parkway, Wyoming.

Seven alternative winter use management plans are evaluated in this EIS; alternative 7 is the NPS preferred alternative. Alternative 1 would put into place the provisions of the temporary winter use plan of August 2004, with some modifications. Alternative 2 would prohibit recreational snowmobiling in the parks in favor of snowcoach access. Alternative 3A would close much of Yellowstone to oversnow travel, leaving the South Entrance to Old Faithful route open to such use. A variation of alternative 3 (3B) is the no action alternative—it closes all routes to motorized oversnow recreation. This would be the outcome of the temporary plan, should no new decision be made. Four other alternatives (4, 5, 6, and 7) would allow varying levels of snowmobile and snowcoach access to continue in the parks. Alternative 4 would allow for increased snowmobile use, relative to historic numbers. Alternative 5 would allow for some unguided snowmobile use and would feature seasonal and

flexible daily entry limits in Yellowstone. Alternative 6 would provide for plowing some roads in Yellowstone to allow commercial wheeled-vehicle access from West Yellowstone and Mammoth to Old Faithful. Preferred alternative 7 would provide for a balance of snowmobile and snowcoach use and protect park soundscapes, air quality, wildlife and other resources. In Yellowstone, the daily limit on snowmobiles would be 540 snowmobiles per day in Yellowstone. 65 snowmobiles would be allowed per day in Grand Teton and the Parkway. In Yellowstone, all snowmobilers would be required to travel with a commercial guide, and in both parks, all snowcoaches and most snowmobiles would be required to use Best Available Technology (BAT). 83 snowcoaches would be allowed into Yellowstone daily. The East Entrance would remain open for cross-country ski and snowshoe access.

**DATES:** The National Park Service will execute a Record of Decision (ROD) no sooner than 30 days following publication by the Environmental Protection Agency of the Notice of Availability of the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

**ADDRESSES:** Information will be available for public inspection online at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/yell>, in the office of Superintendent Suzanne Lewis, PO Box 168, Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190, 307-344-2019 and in the office of Superintendent Mary Gibson Scott, Grand Teton National Park, PO Drawer 170, Moose, WY 83012-0170, 307-739-3300.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Kevin Franken, P.O. Box 168, Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190, 307-344-2019, [yell\\_winter\\_use@nps.gov](mailto:yell_winter_use@nps.gov).

Dated: August 30, 2007.

**John T. Crowley**

*Acting Regional Director, Intermountain Region, National Park Service.*

[FR Doc. E7-18935 Filed 9-24-07; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4312-CT-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Reclamation

#### Walker River Basin Acquisitions Program, Mineral, Lyon, and Douglas Counties, NV

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Reclamation, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) and notice of public scoping meetings.

**SUMMARY:** Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) proposes to prepare an EIS for the Walker River Basin Acquisitions Program. The primary purpose of the program is to comply with the requirements of Public Law 107-171 (Desert Terminal Lakes Program), which appropriates funds to provide water to at-risk natural desert terminal lakes, and with Public Law 109-103, which allocates funds to the University of Nevada for two specific purposes. The first purpose is to implement a program for environmental restoration to acquire from willing sellers land, water appurtenant to the land, and related interests in the Walker River Basin, Nevada. Acquired water rights would be transferred to provide water to Walker Lake. The second purpose of the University's funding is to establish and operate an agricultural and natural resources center. The actions to be analyzed in this EIS will be the purchase of water rights and related interests from willing sellers in the Walker River Basin, Nevada.

**DATES:** A series of public scoping meetings will be held to solicit public input on the alternatives, concerns, and issues to be addressed in the EIS. The meetings dates are:

- Monday, October 22, 2007, 6 to 8 p.m., Reno, NV.
- Tuesday, October 23, 2007, 6 to 8 p.m., Yerington, NV.
- Wednesday, October 24, 2007, 6 to 8 p.m., Hawthorne, NV.
- Thursday, October 25, 2007, 6 to 8 p.m., Bridgeport, CA.

Written comments on the scope of the EIS should be sent by November 26, 2007.

**ADDRESSES:** The public scoping meetings locations are:

- Reno at Rancho San Rafael Park, Main Ranch House, 1595 N. Sierra Street.
- Yerington at Yerington High School, gymnasium, 114 Pearl Street.
- Hawthorne at Mineral County Public Library, meeting room, 110 1st Street.
- Bridgeport at Bridgeport Memorial Hall, 73 N. School Street.

Send comments on the scope of the EIS to Mrs. Caryn Hunt DeCarlo, Bureau of Reclamation, 705 N. Plaza Street, Room 320, Carson City, NV 89701, via e-mail to [chunttdecarlo@mp.usbr.gov](mailto:chunttdecarlo@mp.usbr.gov), or faxed to 775-884-8376.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mrs. Hunt DeCarlo, 775-884-8352.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The project area is in the Walker River Basin

within Nevada, and includes both the East and West Walker Rivers. The goal of the program is to acquire water rights sufficient to increase the long-term average annual inflow to Walker Lake by up to 50,000 acre-feet. To increase Walker Lake inflows by up to 50,000 acre-feet annually may require acquiring more than 50,000 acre-feet of water rights due to annual hydrologic variability.

#### Special Assistance for Public Scoping Meeting

If special assistance is required at the scoping meetings, please contact Caryn Hunt DeCarlo at 775-884-8352, TDD 775-882-3436, or via e-mail at [chunttdecarlo@mp.usbr.gov](mailto:chunttdecarlo@mp.usbr.gov). Please notify Mrs. Hunt DeCarlo as far in advance of the meetings as possible to enable Reclamation to secure the needed services. If a request cannot be honored, the requestor will be notified. A telephone device for the hearing impaired (TDD) is available at 775-882-3436.

#### Public Disclosure

Before including your name, address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Dated: September 18, 2007.

**Robert Eckart,**

*Acting Regional Environmental Officer, Mid-Pacific Region.*

[FR Doc. E7-18879 Filed 9-24-07; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-MN-P

#### INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMISSION

[USITC SE-07-018]

#### Government In the Sunshine Act Meeting Notice

**AGENCY HOLDING THE MEETING:** United States International Trade Commission.

**TIME AND DATE:** October 2, 2007 at 11 a.m.

**PLACE:** Room 101, 500 E Street, SW., Washington, DC 20436, Telephone: (202) 205-2000.

**STATUS:** Open to the public.

#### MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED:

1. Agenda for future meetings: None.
2. Minutes.

3. Ratification List.

4. Inv. Nos. 731-TA-919 and 920 (Review) (Welded Large Diameter Line Pipe from Japan and Mexico)—briefing and vote. (The Commission is currently scheduled to transmit its determinations and Commissioners' opinions to the Secretary of Commerce on or before October 16, 2007.)

5. Outstanding action jackets: None.

In accordance with Commission policy, subject matter listed above, not disposed of at the scheduled meeting, may be carried over to the agenda of the following meeting.

By order of the Commission.

Issued: September 19, 2007.

**William R. Bishop,**

*Hearings and Meetings Coordinator.*

[FR Doc. E7-18811 Filed 9-24-07; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7020-02-P

#### DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

[OMB Number 1122-0013]

#### Office on Violence Against Women; Agency Information Collection Activities: Extension of a Currently Approved Collection; Comments Requested

**ACTION:** 30-day notice of information collection under review: Semi-Annual Progress Report for the Rural Domestic Violence and Child Victimization Enforcement Grant Program.

The Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), will be submitting the following information collection request to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and approval in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995. The proposed information collection is published to obtain comments from the public and affected agencies. This proposed information collection was previously published in the **Federal Register** Volume 72, Number 137, page 39447 on July 18, 2007, allowing for a 60-day comment period.

The purpose of this notice is to allow for an additional 30 days for public comment until October 25, 2007. This process is conducted in accordance with 5 CFR 1320.10.

Written comments and/or suggestions regarding the items contained in this notice, especially the estimated public burden and associated response time, should be directed to the Office of Management and Budget, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Attention Department of Justice Desk Officer, Washington, DC 20503. Additionally, comments may be

submitted to OMB via facsimile to (202) 395-5806.

Written comments and suggestions from the public and affected agencies concerning the proposed collection of information are encouraged. Your comments should address one or more of the following four points:

(1) Evaluate whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility;

(2) Evaluate the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;

(3) Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and

(4) Minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses.

#### Overview of This Information Collection

(1) *Type of Information Collection:* Extension of a currently approved collection.

(2) *Title of the Form/Collection:* Semi-Annual Progress Report for Grantees from the Rural Domestic Violence and Child Victimization Enforcement Grant Program.

(3) *Agency form number, if any, and the applicable component of the Department of Justice sponsoring the collection:* Form Number: 1122-0013. U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women (Rural Program).

(4) *Affected public who will be asked or required to respond, as well as a brief abstract:* The affected public includes the approximately 165 grantees of the Rural Program. The primary purpose of the Rural Program is to enhance the safety of victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and child victimization by supporting projects uniquely designed to address and prevent these crimes in rural jurisdictions. Grantees include States, Indian tribes, local governments, and nonprofit, public or private entities, including tribal nonprofit organizations, to carry out programs serving rural areas or rural communities.

(5) *An estimate of the total number of respondents and the amount of time estimated for an average respondent to*

**Mid-Pacific Region  
Sacramento, CA**

MP-07-132

Media Contact: Jeffrey McCracken 916-978-5100  
[jmccracken@mp.usbr.gov](mailto:jmccracken@mp.usbr.gov)

For Release On: September 21, 2007

## **Public Scoping Meetings Scheduled for the Walker River Basin Acquisitions Program, Nevada**

The Bureau of Reclamation will be preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Walker River Basin Acquisitions Program. The purpose of the Program is to comply with the requirements of Public Law 107-171 (Desert Terminal Lakes Program), which appropriates funds to provide water to at-risk natural desert terminal lakes. Follow-on legislation, Public Law 109-103, allocates funds to the University of Nevada to implement a program for environmental restoration to acquire from willing sellers land, water appurtenant to the land, and related interests in the Walker River Basin, Nevada.

The goal of the Program is to acquire water rights sufficient to increase the long-term average annual inflow to Walker Lake by up to 50,000 acre-feet. Due to annual hydrologic variability, increasing Walker Lake inflows by up to 50,000 acre-feet annually may require acquiring more than 50,000 acre-feet of water rights.

A Notice of Intent to prepare the EIS was published in the Federal Register on Tuesday, September 25, 2007. Four public scoping meetings are being held to solicit public input on topics that will be addressed in the EIS, including resources to be evaluated, alternatives to be considered, and identification of significant concerns and issues.

The meetings are scheduled as follows:

### **Nevada**

Reno, Monday, Oct. 22, 6 – 8 p.m., Rancho San Rafael Park, Main Ranch House, 1595 N. Sierra Street  
Yerington, Tuesday, Oct. 23, 6 – 8 p.m., Yerington High School Gymnasium, 114 Pearl Street  
Hawthorne, Wednesday, Oct. 24, 6 – 8 p.m., Mineral County Public Library, Meeting room 110 1st Street

### **California**

Bridgeport, Thursday, Oct. 25, 6 – 8 p.m., Bridgeport Memorial Hall, 73 N. School Street

Written comments on the scope of the EIS should be sent by close of business Monday, November 26, 2007, to Mrs. Caryn Hunt DeCarlo, Bureau of Reclamation, 705 N. Plaza Street, Room 320, Carson City, NV, 89701, e-mail [chunttdecarlo@mp.usbr.gov](mailto:chunttdecarlo@mp.usbr.gov), or fax 775-884-8376. For additional information, please contact Mrs. Hunt DeCarlo at 775-884-8352, TDD 775-882-3436.

# # #

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**Mid-Pacific Region  
Sacramento, CA**

MP-07-

**Media Contact:** Jeffrey McCracken 916-978-5100  
jmccracken@mp.usbr.gov

**For Release On:** October 17, 2007

## **Public Meetings Scheduled for the Walker River Basin Acquisitions Program, Nevada**

The Bureau of Reclamation is beginning preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Walker River Basin Acquisitions Program. The purpose of the Program is to comply with the requirements of Public Law 107-171 (Desert Terminal Lakes Program), which appropriates funds to provide water to at-risk natural desert terminal lakes. Subsequent legislation, Public Law 109-103, allocates funds to the University of Nevada to implement a program for environmental restoration to acquire from willing sellers land, water appurtenant to the land, and related interests in the Walker River Basin, Nevada. All acquired water rights would be transferred to provide water to Walker Lake. The goal of the Program is to acquire sufficient water rights to increase the long-term average annual inflow to Walker Lake by up to 50,000 acre-feet; due to annual variations in precipitation, river flows, etc., achieving the Program goal will require acquiring more than 50,000 acre-feet of water rights.

A Notice of Intent to prepare the EIS was published in the Federal Register on Tuesday, September 25, 2007. Four public meetings are being held to solicit public input and identify significant issues and concerns on topics that will be addressed in the EIS.

The public meetings will be an open house style format with no formal presentation and may be attended any time between 6:00 and 8:00 p.m. Information will be provided and Program team members will be available to answer questions on various aspects of the Water Acquisitions Program and EIS process. Meeting locations are as follows:

### **Nevada**

Reno - Monday, October 22, Rancho San Rafael Park, Main Ranch House, 1595 N. Sierra Street

Yerington - Tuesday, October 23, Yerington High School Gymnasium, 114 Pearl Street

Hawthorne - Wednesday, October 24, Mineral County Public Library, Meeting room 110 1st Street

### **California**

Bridgeport - Thursday, October 25, Bridgeport Memorial Hall, 73 N. School Street

Written comments on the scope of the EIS should be sent by close of business Monday, November 26, 2007, to Mrs. Caryn Hunt DeCarlo, Bureau of Reclamation, 705 N. Plaza Street, Room 320, Carson City, NV, 89701, e-mail [chunttdecarlo@mp.usbr.gov](mailto:chunttdecarlo@mp.usbr.gov), or fax 775-884-8376. For additional information or to request translation services or special assistance, please contact Mrs. Hunt DeCarlo at 775-884-8352, TDD 775-882-3436.

# # #

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OCTOBER 2007

## Public Scoping Meetings Scheduled for the Walker River Basin Acquisitions Program, Nevada

The Bureau of Reclamation will be preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Walker River Basin Acquisitions Program. The purpose of the Program is to comply with the requirements of Public Law 107-171 (Desert Terminal Lakes Program), which appropriates funds to provide water to at-risk natural desert terminal lakes. Follow-on legislation, Public Law 109-103, allocates funds to the University of Nevada to implement a program for environmental restoration to acquire from willing sellers land, water appurtenant to the land, and related interests in the Walker River Basin, Nevada.

The goal of the Program is to acquire water rights sufficient to increase the long-term average annual inflow to Walker Lake by up to 50,000 acre-feet. Due to annual hydrologic variability, increasing Walker Lake inflows by up to 50,000 acre-feet annually may require acquiring more than 50,000 acre-feet of water rights.

A Notice of Intent to prepare the EIS was published in the Federal Register on Tuesday, September 25, 2007. Four public scoping meetings are being held to solicit public input on topics that will be addressed in the EIS, including resources to be evaluated, alternatives to be considered, and identification of significant concerns and issues.

### Public Scoping Meeting Dates and Locations

#### Nevada

- ▶ **Reno**, Monday, Oct. 22, Rancho San Rafael Park, Main Ranch House, 1595 N. Sierra Street
- ▶ **Yerington**, Tuesday, Oct. 23, Yerington High School Gymnasium, 114 Pearl Street
- ▶ **Hawthorne**, Wednesday, Oct. 24, Mineral County Public Library, Meeting Room, 110 1st Street

#### California

- ▶ **Bridgeport**, Thursday, Oct. 25, Bridgeport Memorial Hall, 73 N. School Street

*All meetings are from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.*

Written comments on the scope of the EIS should be sent by close of business Monday, November 26, 2007, to Mrs. Caryn Hunt DeCarlo, Bureau of Reclamation, 705 N. Plaza Street, Room 320, Carson City, NV, 89701, e-mail [chunttdecarlo@mp.usbr.gov](mailto:chunttdecarlo@mp.usbr.gov), or fax 775-884-8376. For additional information, please contact Mrs. Hunt DeCarlo at 775-884-8352, TDD 775-882-3436.

**Mid-Pacific Region  
Sacramento, CA**

MP-07-157

Media Contact: Jeffrey McCracken 916-978-5100  
[jmccracken@mp.usbr.gov](mailto:jmccracken@mp.usbr.gov)

For Release On: November 19, 2007

## **Extension of Public Comments for Deadline for Walker River Basin Acquisitions Program**

The Bureau of Reclamation is extending the scoping comment period deadline for the Walker River Basin Acquisitions Program Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) from November 26, 2007, **to December 10, 2007**. Additional comments are welcome even if comments have already been submitted. Reclamation is preparing the EIS to comply with requirements of Public Law 109-103 which allocates \$70 million from Reclamation to the University of Nevada to acquire from willing sellers land, water appurtenant to the land, and related interests in the Walker River Basin. All acquired water rights would be transferred to provide water to Walker Lake. The goal is to acquire sufficient water rights to increase the long-term average annual inflow to Walker Lake by up to 50,000 acre-feet to help restore a sustainable condition of ecological health to the lake.

Public scoping comments on the acquisitions program outlined in the law will be considered in developing EIS alternatives and identifying significant issues to be addressed in the EIS. In addition, scoping comments can include providing sources of relevant data or information to assist in the EIS analysis of the acquisitions program.

Written comments on the scope of the EIS should be sent by close of business Monday, December 10, 2007 to Mrs. Caryn Hunt DeCarlo, Bureau of Reclamation, 705 N. Plaza Street, Room 320, Carson City, NV, 89701, e-mail [chunttdecarlo@mp.usbr.gov](mailto:chunttdecarlo@mp.usbr.gov), or fax 775-884-8376. For additional information or to request translation services or special assistance, please contact Mrs. Hunt DeCarlo at 775-884-8352, TDD 775-882-3436.

###

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## **Public Meetings Scheduled for the Walker River Basin Acquisitions Program, Nevada**

The Bureau of Reclamation is beginning preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Walker River Basin Acquisitions Program. Subsequent legislation, Public Law 109-103 allocates funds to the University of Nevada to implement a program for environmental restoration to acquire from willing sellers land, water appurtenant to the land, and related interests in the Walker River Basin, Nevada. All acquired water rights would be transferred to provide water to Walker Lake.

Four public meetings are being held to solicit public input and identify significant issues and concerns on topics that will be addressed in the EIS. The public meetings will be an open house style format with no formal presentation and may be attended any time between 6:00 and 8:00 p.m. Meeting locations are as follows:

### **Nevada**

Reno - Monday, October 22, Rancho San Rafael Park, Main Ranch House, 1595 N. Sierra Street

Yerington - Tuesday, October 23, Yerington High School Gymnasium, 114 Pearl Street

Hawthorne - Wednesday, October 24, Mineral County Public Library, Meeting room 110 1st Street

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Bridgeport - Thursday, October 25, Bridgeport Memorial Hall, 73 N. School Street

Written comments on the scope of the EIS should be sent by Monday, November 26, 2007, to Mrs. Caryn Hunt DeCarlo, Bureau of Reclamation, 705 N. Plaza Street, Room 320, Carson City, NV, 89701, e-mail [chunttdecarlo@mp.usbr.gov](mailto:chunttdecarlo@mp.usbr.gov), or fax 775-884-8376. Questions on the EIS or the meetings can be directed to Ms. DeCarlo at 775-884-8352.

## **Extension of Deadline for Walker River Basin Acquisitions Program Scoping Comments**

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) is extending the scoping comment period deadline for the Walker River Basin Acquisitions Program Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) from November 26, 2007 to **December 10, 2007**. Reclamation is preparing the EIS to comply with requirements of Public Law 109-103 which allocates \$70 million from Reclamation to the University of Nevada to acquire from willing sellers land, water appurtenant to the land, and related interests in the Walker River Basin. All acquired water rights would be transferred to provide water to Walker Lake to help restore Walker Lake to a sustainable condition of ecological health.

Public scoping comments on the acquisitions program outlined in the law will be considered in developing EIS alternatives and identifying significant issues to be addressed in the EIS. In addition, scoping comments can include providing sources of relevant data or information to assist in the EIS analysis of the acquisitions program.

Written comments on the scope of the EIS should be sent by close of business Monday, December 10, 2007 to Mrs. Caryn Hunt DeCarlo, Bureau of Reclamation, 705 N. Plaza Street, Room 320, Carson City, NV, 89701, e-mail [chunttdecarlo@mp.usbr.gov](mailto:chunttdecarlo@mp.usbr.gov), or fax 775-884-8376. For additional information or to request translation services or special assistance, please contact Mrs. Hunt DeCarlo at 775-884-8352, TDD 775-882-3436.

## **Walker River Basin Acquisition Program Environmental Impact Statement**

**EXTENSION OF SCOPING COMMENT PERIOD:** The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) is extending the comment period for two weeks from November 26, 2007 to **December 10, 2007** to assist parties interested in providing scoping comments on the proposed acquisitions action for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). If you have already submitted comments, any additional comments you may have are welcome. Please submit comments to Caryn Hunt DeCarlo, Bureau of Reclamation, 705 N. Plaza St., Room 320, Carson City, Nevada, 89701 or email [chunttdecarlo@mp.usbr.gov](mailto:chunttdecarlo@mp.usbr.gov)

### **Bureau of Reclamation Purpose for Preparing an EIS:**

On November 19, 2005 President Bush signed into law legislation passed by Congress (P.L. 109-103, the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act, 2006). Section 208 of the law is as follows:

TITLE II, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, Bureau of Reclamation, General Provisions

- (a) (1) Using amounts made available under section 2507 of the Farm and Security Rural Investment Act of 2002 (43 U.S.C. 2211 note; Public Law 107-171), the Secretary [of the Interior] shall provide not more than \$70,000,000 to the University of Nevada—
  - (A) to acquire from willing sellers land, water appurtenant to the land, and related interests in the Walker River Basin, Nevada; and
  - (B) to establish and administer an agricultural and natural resources center, the mission of which shall be to undertake research, restoration, and educational activities in the Walker River Basin relating to—
    - (i) innovative agricultural water conservation;
    - (ii) cooperative programs for environmental restoration;
    - (iii) fish and wildlife habitat restoration; and
    - (iv) wild horse and burro research and adoption marketing.
- (2) In acquiring interests under paragraph (1)(A), the University of Nevada shall make acquisitions that the University determines are the most beneficial to—
  - (A) the establishment and operation of the agricultural and natural resources research center authorized under paragraph (1)(B); and
  - (B) environmental restoration in the Walker River Basin.

The law directs Reclamation to provide \$70 million to the University to use as directed in the above law. As required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Reclamation is preparing an EIS to analyze the impacts of implementing the law. The EIS Purpose and Need for the proposed project is to comply with the direction specified in the law.

### **EIS Consideration of No Action Alternative:**

The EIS will analyze a “No Action Alternative” as required by NEPA in addition to identifying and analyzing alternatives that comply with the specified direction in the law for acquisitions from willing sellers. The No Action Alternative will describe no change from current conditions (no change in current water/land operation, management, and ownership). Many people have expressed they do not support the water acquisitions program and/or do not believe more water should go to Walker Lake; the EIS will include an analysis of not implementing the acquisitions program under the No Action Alternative.

### **NEPA Scoping:**

Soliciting public scoping comments on the proposed acquisitions action is one of the first steps in the NEPA process. Comments on the acquisitions program will be considered in developing EIS alternatives and identifying significant issues to be addressed in the EIS. In addition, scoping comments can include providing sources of relevant data or information to assist in the EIS analysis of the acquisitions program.

Known potentially significant issues that Reclamation has already identified for the proposed acquisitions action and will analyze in the EIS include:

1. Effects on water resources/hydrology, including domestic wells, depth to groundwater, water quality, impacts to irrigators, irrigation infrastructure and operation.
2. Difficulties with delivering acquired water to Walker Lake.
3. Socioeconomic effects on the Walker River Basin, including local communities lifestyles; population decline of agricultural workers; change in land use; change or loss of tax infrastructure/services; impacts on agriculture; and impacts to recreation, economy, cultural, scenic, and aesthetic impacts.
4. Loss of both irrigated agricultural lands and wildlife habitat and potential subsequent increase in noxious weeds and degraded air quality due to increased dust.

### **Clarifications Based on Comments Received To Date:**

- The legislation specifically states only willing sellers will be part of the acquisition program. Only people who own property and/or water rights and want to sell or lease a portion or all of their rights will be considered in the program. People who do not want to sell will not be included.
- The purpose of scoping is to solicit public input to help develop the EIS for the proposed action (direction in the law). The scoping meetings were not intended to present detailed alternatives, impacts analyses of the acquisitions, or resolution of issues associated with the proposed action; these EIS steps have not yet occurred as public scoping input will be used to assist with guiding these NEPA activities.
- To help restore Walker Lake to a sustainable condition of ecological health the EIS anticipates acquiring enough water rights to increase average annual inflows to Walker Lake by up to approximately 50,000 acre-feet (supporting study by Thomas (1995) can be viewed at: [http://water.usgs.gov/wid/FS\\_115-95/FS\\_115-95.pdf](http://water.usgs.gov/wid/FS_115-95/FS_115-95.pdf) ).
- The Reclamation EIS analyzing the acquisition program does not consider acquisitions in California because the law specifically directs acquisitions are to occur in the Walker River Basin in Nevada only. The law also specifies the funding is to be used for acquisitions from willing sellers only, thus other options of providing water to the lake (such as desalination) will not be analyzed in detail in this EIS. Reclamation is directed to implement the law as written and does not have the authority or discretion to change the law.

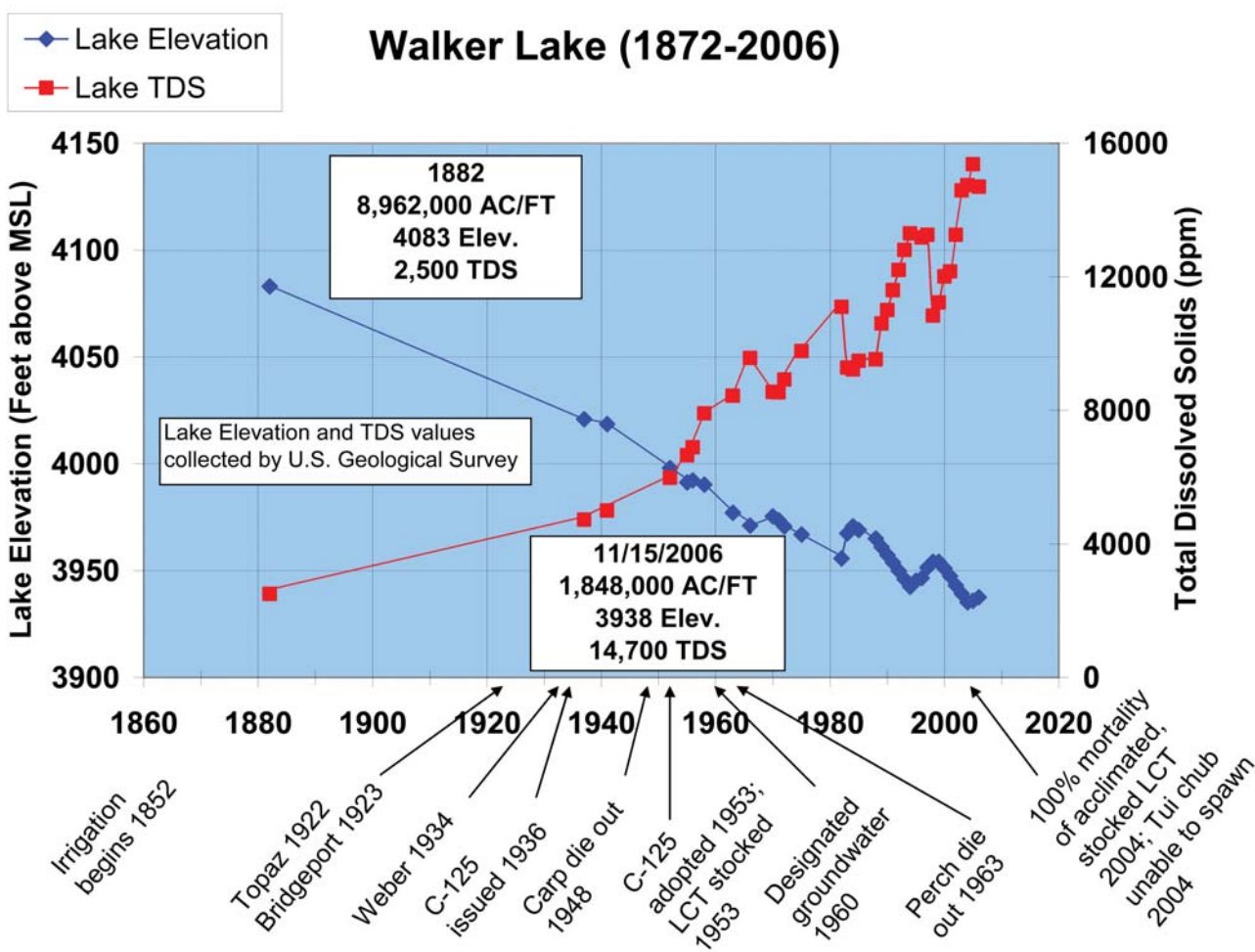
## **Appendix B—Materials Presented at Public Scoping Meetings**



# **Welcome to the Public Meeting for the Walker River Basin Acquisition Program**

## ► Background

Walker Lake is a rare natural desert terminal lake that is at risk of ecological collapse; it needs significantly increased freshwater inflows both immediately and over the long term to reverse ongoing declines in volume, elevation, and water quality. Decreased lake volume and depth and increased TDS threaten the lake's fish and the migratory birds that feed on them.

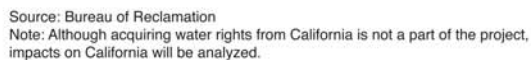


Source: S.E. Sharpe, M.E. Cablk, J.M. Thomas. 2007. The Walker Basin, Nevada and California: Physical Environment, Hydrology, and Biology. Desert Research Institute.



## ► Purpose and Need

The purpose of the Walker River Basin Acquisition Program is to provide water to Walker Lake, an at-risk natural desert terminal lake in Nevada, by acquiring from willing sellers land, water appurtenant to the land, and related interests in the Walker River Basin; and to make acquisitions that are the most beneficial to environmental restoration in the Walker River Basin. The program is needed to implement section 208(a) of Public Law (Pub. L.) 109-103 in accordance with section 2507 of Pub. L. 101-171 (as amended) and section 207(a)(1) of Pub. L. 108-7; and to begin the process of restoring Walker Lake to a sustainable condition of ecological health through provision of increased freshwater inflows.



## ► Project Objectives

The principal environmental restoration objectives for the Program will be to (a) provide freshwater inflows of up to an average of 50,000 acre-feet annually to improve the ecological health of Walker Lake, and (b) sustain improved conditions over the long term.

It is also likely that delivery of acquired water rights may result in indirect benefits to (and possibly impacts on) riparian, wetland, and/or instream resources upstream of Walker Lake.

## ► Authorizing Legislation

### **PUBLIC LAW 107-171, ENACTED MAY 13, 2002**

*First designated \$200 million to the Bureau of Reclamation “to provide water to at-risk natural desert terminal lakes” ...*

### **PUBLIC LAW 108-7, ENACTED FEBRUARY 20, 2003**

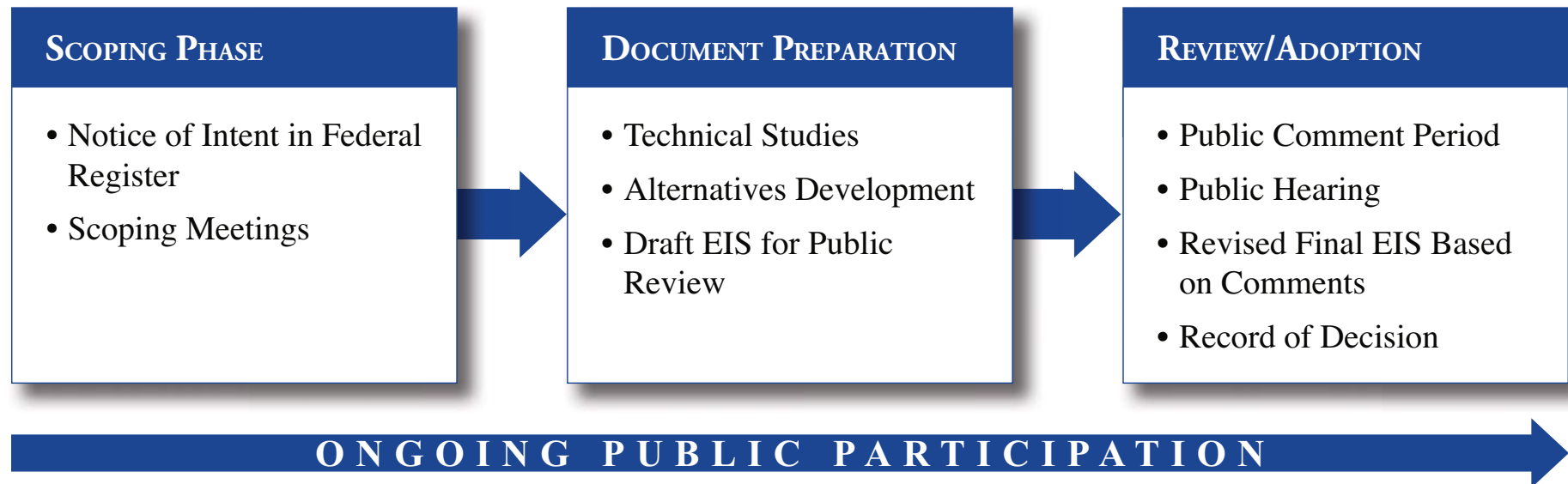
*Then specified that funding was to be used “only for Pyramid, Summit, and Walker Lakes in the State of Nevada” ...*

### **PUBLIC LAW 109-103, ENACTED NOVEMBER 19, 2005**

*Earmarked through the Bureau of Reclamation \$70 million to the University of Nevada to 1) acquire from willing sellers land, water appurtenant to the land, and related interests in the Walker River Basin, and 2) to establish and administer an agricultural and natural resources center to undertake research, restoration, and educational activities in the Walker River Basin ...*

## ► EIS Process

**WE ARE HERE**



An environmental impact statement (EIS) serves a number of purposes:

- Gives the public an opportunity to provide input regarding issues, possible impacts, and sources of data and seeks review and comment on the EIS
- Identifies potential environmental impacts of the alternatives under consideration
- Allows decision makers the opportunity to consider the environmental impacts of a project



## ► Endangered Species Act



*Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep*



*Lahontan Cutthroat Trout*



*Mountain Yellow-Legged Frog*



*Yosemite Toad*



*Yellow-Billed Cuckoo*

The purpose of the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) is to conserve ecosystems and species that depend on those ecosystems.

Species that may be analyzed in the biological assessment, which will be prepared in compliance with the ESA, include:

- Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep, endangered
- Lahontan cutthroat trout, threatened
- Mountain yellow-legged frog, candidate
- Yosemite toad, candidate
- Yellow-billed cuckoo, candidate
- Fisher, candidate
- Bald eagle, delisted

## ► Project Team

### ***Bureau of Reclamation***

The Bureau of Reclamation is providing \$70 million to the University of Nevada for the Walker River Basin Acquisition Program. Reclamation will prepare an environmental impact statement for the program pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act.

### ***University of Nevada***

The Walker River Basin Acquisition Program is authorized and funded by Congress through Public Law 109-103, Section 208, which awards \$70 million to the University of Nevada for research and water rights acquisition. The Program is a collaborative partnership between the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) and the Desert Research Institute (DRI) through the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE). DRI and UNR bring environmental, agricultural, and economic expertise to the Program. NSHE coordinates the Program through the Office of the Chancellor. NSHE has contracted with legal and water rights consultants to help manage the Program. The Bureau of Reclamation is providing funding for the Program.

### ***Jones & Stokes***

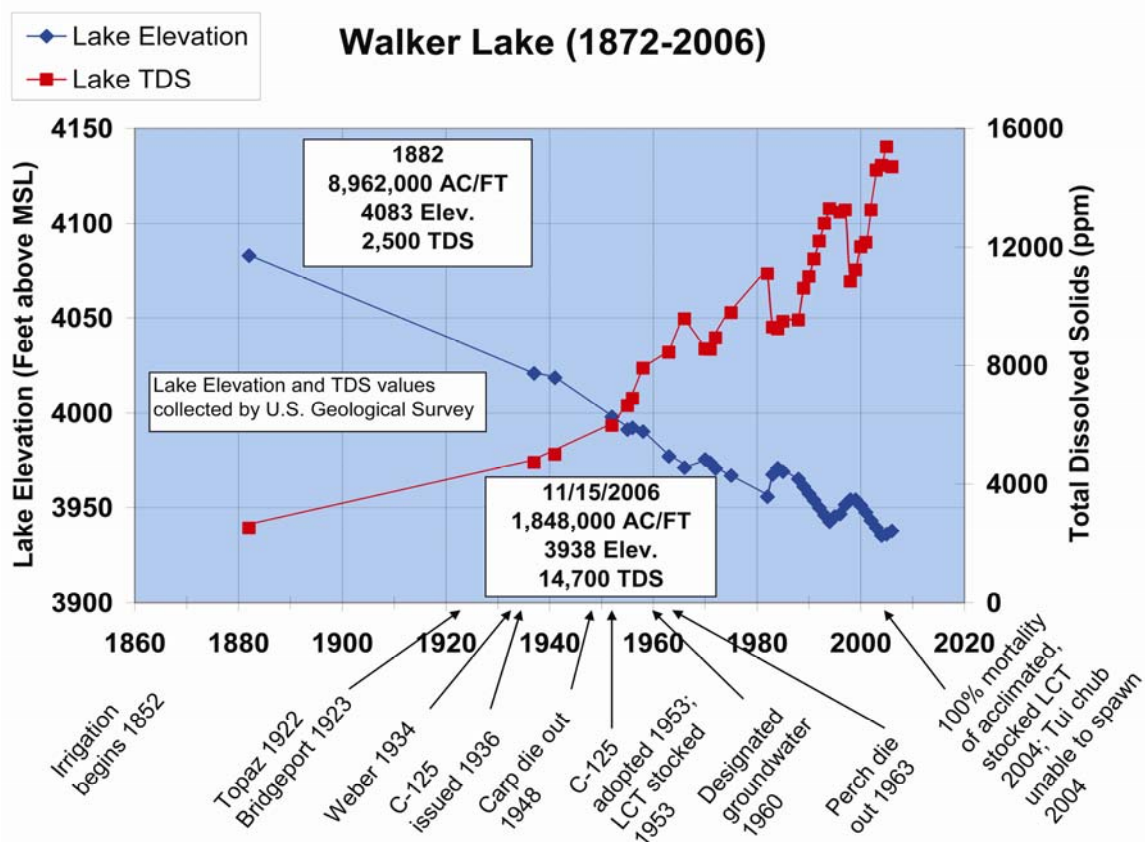
Jones & Stokes is an environmental consulting firm with more than 30 years of experience in helping agencies comply with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act. Jones & Stokes will prepare the EIS for the Walker River Basin Acquisition Program.

# Comments and Refreshments



## Background Handout

Walker Lake is a rare natural desert terminal lake that is at risk of ecological collapse; it needs significantly increased freshwater inflows both immediately and over the long term to reverse ongoing declines in volume, elevation, and water quality. Over the past 124 years, freshwater withdrawals, primarily for irrigated agriculture, have resulted in a 145-foot drop in the lake's surface elevation and a corresponding reduction in volume of nearly 80%. These declines have resulted in a corresponding increase in total dissolved solids (TDS) from approximately 2,500 mg/l in 1882 to more than 15,000 mg/l today. The high TDS level has caused decreased water quality in the lake.



Decreased lake volume and depth have adversely affected the Walker Lake ecosystem, while increased TDS, increased water temperatures, and decreased dissolved oxygen concentrations have contributed to changes in nutrient cycling, biotic communities, and the extent and quality of fish habitat. Walker Lake currently supports stocked populations of Lahontan cutthroat trout (*Onchorhynchus clarki henshawi*), a federally listed threatened fish species once native to the lake and the Walker River system; and Lahontan tui chub (*Gila bicolor*), a critical food source for the Lake's LCT population and for migratory fish-eating birds like the common loon (*Gaver immer*) and white pelican (*Pelicanus erythrophynchos*). If conditions continue to decline, neither LCT nor tui-chub will be able to survive in Walker Lake (both species are already struggling due to elevated TDS levels) and a major regional food source for fish-eating migratory birds will have vanished. With ever-increasing TDS concentrations, Walker Lake could become more like Mono Lake, hosting brine flies and brine shrimp at TDS levels of approximately 80,000 mg/l.

## Authorizing Legislation Handout

### Summary

The Walker River Basin Acquisitions Program is being funded under the U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Reclamation's (Reclamation) Desert Terminal Lakes Program, established in 2002 pursuant to Section 2507 of Public Law 101-171. That legislation provided \$200 million to be used by the Secretary of the Interior (acting through the Commissioner of Reclamation) "to provide water to at-risk natural desert terminal lakes" subject to the limitation that those funds could not be used "to purchase or lease water rights." Subsequent legislation in 2003 clarified that the funds set aside in 2002 are to be used "only for the Pyramid, Summit, and Walker Lakes in the State of Nevada" (Public Law 108-7, Section 207(a)(1)). Additional legislation in 2005 amended the 2002 authorization further and provides not more than \$70 million (out of the original \$200 million) for the University of Nevada "to acquire from willing sellers land, water appurtenant to the land, and related interests in the Walker River Basin, Nevada" (Public Law 109-103, Section 208(a)). The 2005 amendment effectively supersedes the 2002 prohibition against the purchase or lease of water rights for the \$70 million provided within the Walker River Basin.

### The Legislation

Following are pertinent excerpts of authorizing legislation for the Acquisition Program. Complete copies of the legislation text referenced below will be made available upon request.

**Public Law 107-171: Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002**  
**(Farm Bill)**  
**Enacted on May 13, 2002**

**SEC. 2507. DESERT TERMINAL LAKES.**

(a) *IN GENERAL.*— Subject to subsection (b), as soon as practicable after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall transfer \$200,000,000 of the funds of the Commodity Credit Corporation to the Bureau of Reclamation Water and Related Resources Account, which funds shall —

- (1) *be used by the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Commissioner of Reclamation, to provide water to at-risk natural desert terminal lakes;*  
*and*
- (2) *remain available until expended.*

**Public Law 108-7, Omnibus Appropriations Bill**  
**Enacted on February 20, 2003**

***Bureau of Reclamation***

*The following appropriations shall be expended to execute authorized functions of the Bureau of Reclamation:*

***SEC. 207. RESTORATION OF FISH, WILDLIFE, AND ASSOCIATED HABITATS IN WATERSHEDS OF CERTAIN LAKES.***

*(a) IN GENERAL- In carrying out section 2507 of Public Law 107-171, the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Commissioner of Reclamation, shall —*

- (1) subject to paragraph (3), provide water and assistance under that section **only for the Pyramid, Summit, and Walker Lakes in the State of Nevada;***

**Public Law 109-103, the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act, 2006,**  
**Enacted on November 19, 2005.**

***Title II, Department Of The Interior***

***Bureau of Reclamation***

***General Provisions, Department of the Interior***

***SEC. 208.***

*(a) (1) Using amounts made available under section 2507 of the Farm and Security Rural Investment Act of 2002 (43 U.S.C. 2211 note; Public Law 107-171), **the Secretary** [of the Interior] shall provide not more than **\$70,000,000** to the **University of Nevada—***

*(A) to acquire from willing sellers land, water appurtenant to the land, and related interests in the Walker River Basin, Nevada; and*

*(B) to establish and administer an agricultural and natural resources center, the mission of which shall be to undertake research, restoration, and educational **activities in the Walker River Basin** relating to—*

*(i) innovative agricultural water conservation;*

*(ii) cooperative programs for environmental restoration;*

*(iii) fish and wildlife habitat restoration; and*

*(iv) wild horse and burro research and adoption marketing.*

*(2) In acquiring interests under paragraph (1)(A), the University of Nevada shall make acquisitions that the University determines are the most beneficial to—*

*(A) the establishment and operation of the agricultural and natural resources research center authorized under paragraph (1)(B); and*

*(B) environmental restoration in the **Walker River Basin**.*

US DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BUREAU OF RECLAMATION  
WALKER RIVER BASIN ACQUISITION PROGRAM AND EIS  
LAHONTAN BASIN AREA OFFICE, NEVADA

## Public Comment Card

Please use this comment card to submit input regarding the Walker River Basin Acquisition Program and the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Please include any sources of relevant data or information that you feel may enhance this document. Comments must be received by **November 26, 2007**.

Comments can be submitted in the following ways:

1. Turn in today at the Public Meeting; or
2. By US Mail addressed to Mrs. Caryn Hunt DeCarlo, Lahontan Basin Area Office, U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, 705 N. Plaza St., Room 320, Carson City, NV 89701; or
3. By E-mail to [chunttdecarlo@mp.usbr.gov](mailto:chunttdecarlo@mp.usbr.gov); or
4. By Fax to (775) 884-8376; or
5. If you have questions regarding the EIS or the process, please call Caryn Hunt DeCarlo at (775) 884-8352.

**Privacy Notice:** Before including your name, address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment - including your personal identifying information - may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. Unless indicated by you otherwise, you will automatically be added to the official EIS mailing list by submitting this form.

### PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliation (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Comments:** (Comments may be continued on the back or a separate sheet.)

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*Comments must be received by November 26, 2007*

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## Public Scoping Guides EIS Development

Scoping is designed to seek out concerns, ideas and opinions of agencies, tribes, businesses, interest groups and individuals that could be affected by the proposed actions. The information gathered is used to focus the scope of the EIS on the issues of primary concern. The primary purpose of an EIS is to inform the public and decision makers about the environmental impacts associated with a project, and to provide a forum for public input into the decision making process.

### Step 1: Publish Notice of Intent

The notice of intent is published in the *Federal Register* to inform the public and other agencies that an EIS will be prepared.

### Step 2: Public Scoping (why we are here)

Agencies, tribes and the public are asked to comment on the proposal and what elements of the environment should be analyzed in the EIS. A public scoping meeting is held during the scoping period to gather public comment.

### Step 3: Impact Analysis

The objective is to estimate the nature, severity and duration of impacts that might occur and to compare the impacts of each alternative. Alternatives are proposed actions to meet the identified purpose and need of the Proposed Action in the EIS.

### Step 4: Draft EIS Circulated

The public and other agencies are given an opportunity to comment on the content of the EIS before it is finalized. A public hearing is held to inform the community and interested parties and gather comments on the draft EIS.

### Step 5: Final EIS Published

The Final EIS includes responses to the comments made on the draft EIS; if determined to be appropriate, changes may be made to the EIS based on comments. There is no comment period for a final EIS, although there is a 7-day waiting period before agencies are allowed to issue any permits or approvals for the proposal.

### Step 6: Record of Decision

The record of decision (ROD) is a written public record that explains why an agency has taken a particular course of action. A ROD describes the decision, the alternatives considered, factors considered by the agency, mitigation measures (if any) that were adopted, and the monitoring and enforcement program.

## Federal Endangered Species Act

The purpose of the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) is to conserve ecosystems and species that depend on those ecosystems.

Section 7 of the ESA requires federal agencies, in consultation with USFWS and/or NOAA Fisheries, to ensure that their actions do not jeopardize the continued existence of endangered or threatened species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of the critical habitat of these species.

Species that will be analyzed in the biological assessment, which will be prepared in compliance with the ESA, include:

- [Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep](#) (*Ovis canadensis californiana*), endangered
- [Lahontan cutthroat trout](#) (*Oncorhynchus clarki henshawi*), threatened
- [Yellow-billed cuckoo](#) (*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*) (Western U.S. DPS), candidate
- [Mountain yellow-legged frog](#) (*Rana muscosa*) (Sierra Nevada DPS), candidate
- [Yosemite toad](#) (*Bufo canorus*), candidate
- [Fisher](#) (*Martes pennanti*) (West Coast DPS), candidate
- [Bald eagle](#) (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), delisted

Other species, such as the pygmy rabbit (*Brachylagus idahoensis*), the sage grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*), Williams combleaf (*Polyctenium williamsiae*), and species listed by Nevada's Natural Heritage Program may also be included.



## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is the purpose of the Walker River Basin Acquisition Program (Program)?

The purpose of the Program is to deliver additional water to Walker Lake.

### Will the Program include acquisition of water and/or water rights?

The Program will acquire water and water rights from willing sellers at fair market value.

### Will the water purchased as part of the Program be transferred to Las Vegas or any other areas outside of the Walker River Basin?

No. The purchased water would be solely for the benefit of Walker Lake and the Walker River Basin ecosystem.

### Will the concerns of Walker River Basin residents be considered in the EIS?

Comments received during this scoping process will be used to determine issues that need to be addressed in the EIS for the analysis of impacts of the Program. While the EIS contents are ultimately the responsibility of the lead federal agency, the Bureau of Reclamation, serious consideration will be given to all comments received. All reasonable alternatives that meet the purpose and need of the Program will be considered.

Scoping comments must be mailed to the Bureau of Reclamation by November 26, 2007; comments also may be made when the Draft EIS is released for public review.

### What potential issues have been identified so far to be analyzed in the EIS?

- Effects on water resources/hydrology, including domestic wells, depth to groundwater, water quality, and irrigation infrastructure and operation.
- Difficulties with delivering acquired water to the Walker Lake.
- Socioeconomic effects on the Walker River Basin, including local communities' lifestyles; population decline of agricultural workers; change in land use; change or loss of tax infrastructure/services; impacts on agriculture; and recreation, economy, cultural, scenic, and aesthetic impacts on Mineral County and Hawthorne.
- Loss of both irrigated agricultural lands and wildlife habitat, potential subsequent increase in noxious weeds, and degraded air quality as a result of increased dust.



### Will the Program cause the loss of agricultural land and economic and community changes?

It is anticipated that a major part of the Program will include purchase of irrigation water rights, which would be expected to reduce acres of agricultural production. It is likely that the Program will have economic impacts, positive and negative, on communities in the Walker River Basin. The EIS will analyze impacts on willing sellers, landowners not selling water rights, communities, and the environment.

### Will property owners be able to retain partial water rights?

Willing sellers may choose to offer up all or some of their water rights. The University then will decide whether to move forward with the purchase of the offered water rights.

### Will the University both buy and lease water rights?

The University is considering applicable long-term leases, but prefers buying water rights because of the permanent nature of the commitment to transfer water to Walker Lake.

### How many acre-feet of water will really be purchased?

The EIS will analyze purchasing enough water rights to increase annual average inflows to Walker Lake by up to an additional 50,000 acre feet over the long term. Because annual hydrology varies (precipitation, river flows, etc.), more than 50,000 acre-feet of water rights must be acquired to increase Walker Lake inflows by that much. The amount of water rights needed will depend on a number of issues to be analyzed in the EIS. However, current available funding is not likely to allow purchase of the total amount needed to reach the goal of 50,000 acre-feet of annual inflow.

### Why is the Research Center not included as part of the EIS?

The Research Center Program is intended to operate within the University's existing physical facilities; no new permanent facilities are anticipated. The Center will establish a research presence in the Walker River Basin (a virtual research center) to continue the study and monitoring activities that have been initiated to date. The data collected by the Center will educate and inform public agencies, private parties, and the general public.

### Will the water purchased for Walker Lake just be lost to evaporation?

Some purchased water will be part of annual Walker Lake evaporation losses. The EIS also will consider losses during transportation, and water delivery timing and quantity.

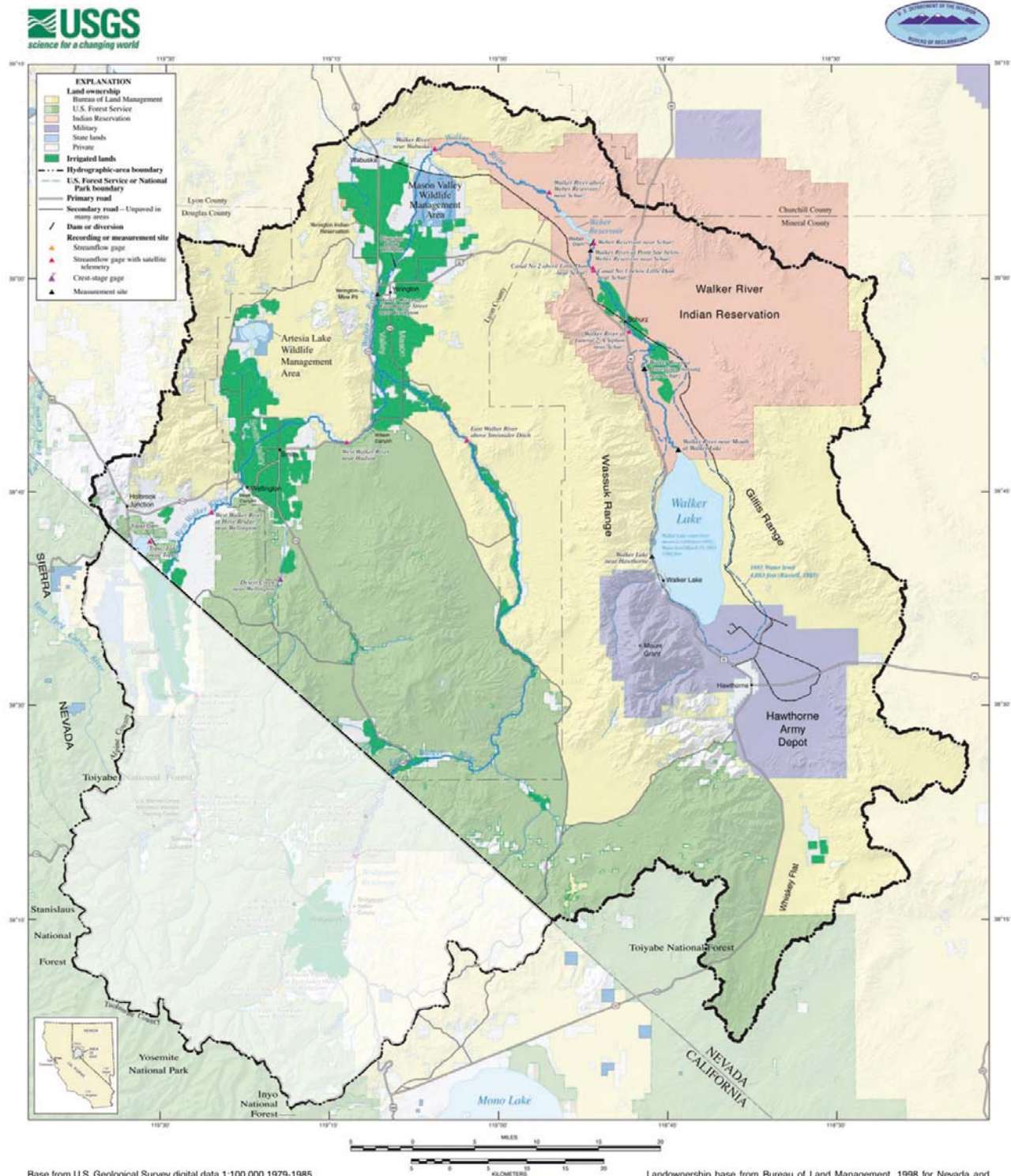
### How is the Program being funded?

Congress authorized and funded the Program through Public Law 109-103, Section 208. The Bureau of Reclamation awarded \$70 million to the University of Nevada, Reno, to fund the Program. Up to \$14 million will go toward research conducted collaboratively by the University and the Desert Research Institute in the Walker Basin; the remaining \$56 million is for the Acquisition Program.

# RECLAMATION

*Managing Water in the West*

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Reclamation



Base from U.S. Geological Survey digital data 1:100,000 1979-1985  
Universal Transverse Mercator projection, Zone 11  
Shaded Relief Base from National Elevation Dataset;  
Sun illumination from northwest at 45 degrees above horizon

Source: Bureau of Reclamation

Note: Although acquiring water rights from California is not a part of the project, impacts on California will be analyzed.

Landownership base from Bureau of Land Management, 1998 for Nevada and the California Spatial Information Library, 1999 for California. Walker River Indian Reservation from U.S. Geological Survey 1985. Hawthorne Army Depot from U.S. Army Corp of Engineers 2002. Irrigated lands from GAP Analysis 1990-1997 and California Department of Water Resources, 2001. Russell, I.C., 1885, Geologic history of Lake Lahontan—A Quaternary Lake in northwestern Nevada: U.S. Geological Survey Monograph 11, 288 p.

## Project Team

### Bureau of Reclamation

The Bureau of Reclamation is providing \$70 million to the University of Nevada for the Walker River Basin Acquisition Program. Reclamation will prepare an environmental impact statement for the Program pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act.

### University of Nevada

The Walker Basin Acquisition Program is authorized and funded by Congress through Public Law 109-103, Section 208, which awards \$70 million to the University of Nevada for research and water rights acquisition. The Program is a collaborative partnership between the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) and the Desert Research Institute (DRI) through the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE). DRI and UNR bring environmental, agricultural and economic expertise to the Program. NSHE coordinates the Program through the Office of the Chancellor. NSHE has contracted with legal and water rights consultants to help manage the Program. The Bureau of Reclamation is providing funding for the Program.

### Jones & Stokes

Jones & Stokes is an environmental consulting firm with more than 30 years of experience in helping agencies comply with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act. Jones & Stokes will be preparing the EIS for the Walker River Basin Acquisition Program.



## **Appendix C—Correspondence with Cooperating Agencies**



## **Invitation Letters to be a Cooperating Agency**







# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION  
Lahontan Basin Area Office  
705 N. Plaza Street, Rm 320  
Carson City, NV 89701

IN REPLY REFER TO:

December 14, 2007

LO-650  
ENV-6.00

Ms. Athena Brown  
Superintendent  
Bureau of Indian Affairs  
Western Nevada Agency  
311 East Washington Street  
Carson City, Nevada 89701

Subject: Cooperating Agency and Meeting Invitation - Walker River Basin Acquisitions  
Program Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Ms. <sup>Athena</sup>~~Brown~~:

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) would like to extend an invitation to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to be a Cooperating Agency to assist with preparation and review of the Walker River Acquisitions Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). We also invite BIA to attend an EIS draft alternatives development meeting to be held on January 3, 2008. Information on that meeting is found below.

The purpose of the Acquisitions Program is to comply with the requirements of Public Law 109-103 which allocates funds to the University of Nevada to implement an environmental restoration program by acquiring from willing sellers land, water appurtenant to the land, and related interests in the Walker River Basin, Nevada. The goal of the acquisition program is to acquire water rights sufficient to increase inflows to Walker Lake up to an additional 50,000 acre-feet per year above historical average flows.

Federal and non-federal agencies and tribes that have jurisdiction by law or have special expertise concerning pertinent environmental issues are invited to participate in the preparation of the EIS. The role of a Cooperating Agency typically involves providing and developing technical information for the EIS environmental analyses. If you elect not to be a Cooperating Agency, you will still have opportunities to be involved in the EIS process. Throughout that process, Reclamation will coordinate with, and seek comments from, all interested parties. Input to the process is welcome at any time.

Reclamation is holding a meeting with Cooperating Agencies to draft alternatives for the EIS on January 3, 2008 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at our office at 705 North Plaza Street, Room 320, Carson City, Nevada. We request that you notify us in writing of your decision to be a

Cooperating Agency on the EIS. Please also let us know if you intend to attend the January 3, 2008 EIS meeting. If you have any questions on the EIS or the meeting, call Caryn Hunt DeCarlo, EIS Project Lead, at (775) 884-8352.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Betsy Rieke". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Elizabeth Ann Rieke  
Area Manager

cc: Mr. Russ Grimes  
Jones and Stokes  
2600 V Street  
Sacramento, California 95818

Mr. Tom Strekal  
Bureau of Indian Affairs  
Western Nevada Agency  
311 East Washington Street  
Carson City, Nevada 89701





## United States Department of the Interior

### BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

Lahontan Basin Area Office  
705 N. Plaza Street, Rm 320  
Carson City, NV 89701

IN REPLY REFER TO:

December 14, 2007

LO-650  
ENV-6.00

Mr. Donald Hicks  
Field Office Manager  
Bureau of Land Management  
5665 Morgan Mills Road  
Carson City, Nevada 89701

Subject: Cooperating Agency and Meeting Invitation - Walker River Basin Acquisitions  
Program Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Don:

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) would like to extend an invitation to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to be a Cooperating Agency to assist with preparation and review of the Walker River Acquisitions Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). We also invite BLM to attend an EIS draft alternatives development meeting to be held on January 3, 2008. Information on that meeting is found below.

The purpose of the Acquisitions Program is to comply with the requirements of Public Law 109-103 which allocates funds to the University of Nevada to implement an environmental restoration program by acquiring from willing sellers land, water appurtenant to the land, and related interests in the Walker River Basin, Nevada. The goal of the acquisition program is to acquire water rights sufficient to increase inflows to Walker Lake up to an additional 50,000 acre-feet per year above historical average flows.

Federal and non-federal agencies and tribes that have jurisdiction by law or have special expertise concerning pertinent environmental issues are invited to participate in the preparation of the EIS. The role of a Cooperating Agency typically involves providing and developing technical information for the EIS environmental analyses. If you elect not to be a Cooperating Agency, you will still have opportunities to be involved in the EIS process. Throughout that process, Reclamation will coordinate with, and seek comments from, all interested parties. Input to the process is welcome at any time.

Reclamation is holding a meeting with Cooperating Agencies to draft alternatives for the EIS on January 3, 2008 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at our office at 705 North Plaza Street, Room 320, Carson City, Nevada. We request that you notify us in writing of your decision to be a

Cooperating Agency on the EIS. Please also let us know if you intend to attend the January 3, 2008 EIS meeting. If you have any questions on the EIS or the meeting, call Caryn Hunt DeCarlo, EIS Project Lead, at (775) 884-8352.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Betsy Rieke". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Elizabeth Ann Rieke  
Area Manager

cc: Mr. Russ Grimes  
Jones and Stokes  
2600 V Street  
Sacramento, California 95818

Mr. Dan Jacquet  
Bureau of Land Management  
5665 Morgan Mill Road  
Carson City, Nevada 89701







# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

Lahontan Basin Area Office  
705 N. Plaza Street, Rm 320  
Carson City, NV 89701

IN REPLY REFER TO:

December 14, 2007

LO-650  
ENV-6.00

Ms. Charlotte Baker  
Chairperson  
Bridgeport Indian Colony  
P. O. Box 37  
Bridgeport, California 93517

Subject: Cooperating Agency and Meeting Invitation - Walker River Basin Acquisitions  
Program Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Ms. Baker:

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) would like to extend an invitation to the Bridgeport Indian Colony (Colony) to be a Cooperating Agency to assist with preparation and review of the Walker River Acquisitions Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). We also invite the Colony to attend an EIS draft alternatives development meeting to be held on January 3, 2008. Information on that meeting is found below.

The purpose of the Acquisitions Program is to comply with the requirements of Public Law 109-103 which allocates funds to the University of Nevada to implement an environmental restoration program by acquiring from willing sellers land, water appurtenant to the land, and related interests in the Walker River Basin, Nevada. The goal of the acquisition program is to acquire water rights sufficient to increase inflows to Walker Lake up to an additional 50,000 acre-feet per year above historical average flows.

Federal and non-federal agencies and tribes that have jurisdiction by law or have special expertise concerning pertinent environmental issues are invited to participate in the preparation of the EIS. The role of a Cooperating Agency typically involves providing and developing technical information for the EIS environmental analyses. If you elect not to be a Cooperating Agency, you will still have opportunities to be involved in the EIS process. Throughout that process, Reclamation will coordinate with, and seek comments from, all interested parties. Input to the process is welcome at any time.

Reclamation is holding a meeting with Cooperating Agencies to draft alternatives for the EIS on January 3, 2008 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at our office at 705 North Plaza Street, Room 320, Carson City, Nevada. We request that you notify us in writing of your decision to be a

Cooperating Agency on the EIS. Please also let us know if you intend to attend the January 3, 2008 EIS meeting. If you have any questions on the EIS or the meeting, call Caryn Hunt DeCarlo, EIS Project Lead, at (775) 884-8352.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Betsy Rieke". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Elizabeth Ann Rieke  
Area Manager

cc: Mr. Russ Grimes  
Jones and Stokes  
2600 V Street  
Sacramento, California 95818





# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

Lahontan Basin Area Office  
705 N. Plaza Street, Rm 320  
Carson City, NV 89701

IN REPLY REFER TO:

December 14, 2007

LO-650  
ENV-6.00

Mr. Dennis Stark  
Manager  
Lyon County  
27 South Main Street  
Yerington, Nevada 89447

Subject: Cooperating Agency and Meeting Invitation - Walker River Basin Acquisitions  
Program Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Mr. Stark:

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) would like to extend an invitation to Lyon County (County) to be a Cooperating Agency to assist with preparation and review of the Walker River Acquisitions Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). We also invite the County to attend an EIS draft alternatives development meeting to be held on January 3, 2008. Information on that meeting is found below.

The purpose of the Acquisitions Program is to comply with the requirements of Public Law 109-103 which allocates funds to the University of Nevada to implement an environmental restoration program by acquiring from willing sellers land, water appurtenant to the land, and related interests in the Walker River Basin, Nevada. The goal of the acquisition program is to acquire water rights sufficient to increase inflows to Walker Lake up to an additional 50,000 acre-feet per year above historical average flows.

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Reclamation is holding a meeting with Cooperating Agencies to draft alternatives for the EIS on January 3, 2008 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at our office at 705 North Plaza Street, Room 320, Carson City, Nevada. We request that you notify us in writing of your decision to be a

Cooperating Agency on the EIS. Please also let us know if you intend to attend the January 3, 2008 EIS meeting. If you have any questions on the EIS or the meeting, call Caryn Hunt DeCarlo, EIS Project Lead, at (775) 884-8352.

Sincerely,

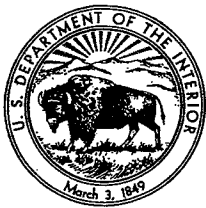
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Betsy Rieke". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Elizabeth Ann Rieke  
Area Manager

cc: Mr. Russ Grimes  
Jones and Stokes  
2600 V Street  
Sacramento, California 95818







## United States Department of the Interior

**BUREAU OF RECLAMATION**  
Lahontan Basin Area Office  
705 N. Plaza Street, Rm 320  
Carson City, NV 89701

IN REPLY REFER TO:

December 14, 2007

LO-650  
ENV-6.00

Ms. Michelle Langsdorf  
District Manager  
Mason and Smith Valley Conservation Districts  
215 West Bridge Street, Suite 11A  
Yerington, Nevada 89447

**Subject: Cooperating Agency and Meeting Invitation - Walker River Basin Acquisitions  
Program Environmental Impact Statement**

Dear Ms. Langsdorf:

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) would like to extend an invitation to the Mason and Smith Valley Conservation Districts (Districts) to be a Cooperating Agency to assist with preparation and review of the Walker River Acquisitions Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). We also invite the Districts to attend an EIS draft alternatives development meeting to be held on January 3, 2008. Information on that meeting is found below.

The purpose of the Acquisitions Program is to comply with the requirements of Public Law 109-103 which allocates funds to the University of Nevada to implement an environmental restoration program by acquiring from willing sellers land, water appurtenant to the land, and related interests in the Walker River Basin, Nevada. The goal of the acquisition program is to acquire water rights sufficient to increase inflows to Walker Lake up to an additional 50,000 acre-feet per year above historical average flows.

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Reclamation is holding a meeting with Cooperating Agencies to draft alternatives for the EIS on January 3, 2008 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at our office at 705 North Plaza Street, Room 320, Carson City, Nevada. We request that you notify us in writing of your decision to be a

Cooperating Agency on the EIS. Please also let us know if you intend to attend the January 3, 2008 EIS meeting. If you have any questions on the EIS or the meeting, call Caryn Hunt DeCarlo, EIS Project Lead, at (775) 884-8352.

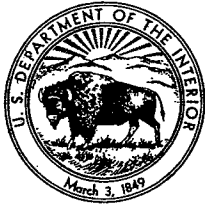
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Betsy Rieke". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Elizabeth Ann Rieke  
Area Manager

cc: Mr. Russ Grimes  
Jones and Stokes  
2600 V Street  
Sacramento, California 95818





# United States Department of the Interior

**BUREAU OF RECLAMATION**  
Lahontan Basin Area Office  
705 N. Plaza Street, Rm 320  
Carson City, NV 89701

IN REPLY REFER TO:

December 14, 2007

LO-650  
ENV-6.00

Mr. Ed Fowler  
Chairman  
Mineral County Commissioners  
P. O. Box 1450  
Hawthorne, Nevada 89415

**Subject: Cooperating Agency and Meeting Invitation - Walker River Basin Acquisitions  
Program Environmental Impact Statement**

Dear Mr. Fowler:

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) would like to extend an invitation to Mineral County (County) to be a Cooperating Agency to assist with preparation and review of the Walker River Acquisitions Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). We also invite the County to attend an EIS draft alternatives development meeting to be held on January 3, 2008. Information on that meeting is found below.

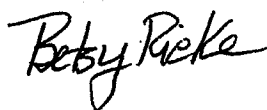
The purpose of the Acquisitions Program is to comply with the requirements of Public Law 109-103 which allocates funds to the University of Nevada to implement an environmental restoration program by acquiring from willing sellers land, water appurtenant to the land, and related interests in the Walker River Basin, Nevada. The goal of the acquisition program is to acquire water rights sufficient to increase inflows to Walker Lake up to an additional 50,000 acre-feet per year above historical average flows.

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Reclamation is holding a meeting with Cooperating Agencies to draft alternatives for the EIS on January 3, 2008 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at our office at 705 North Plaza Street, Room 320, Carson City, Nevada. We request that you notify us in writing of your decision to be a

Cooperating Agency on the EIS. Please also let us know if you intend to attend the January 3, 2008 EIS meeting. If you have any questions on the EIS or the meeting, call Caryn Hunt DeCarlo, EIS Project Lead, at (775) 884-8352.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Betsy Rieke". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Elizabeth Ann Rieke  
Area Manager

cc: Mr. Russ Grimes  
Jones and Stokes  
2600 V Street  
Sacramento, California 95818







# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

Lahontan Basin Area Office  
705 N. Plaza Street, Rm 320  
Carson City, NV 89701

IN REPLY REFER TO:

December 14, 2007

LO-650  
ENV-6.00

Mr. Allen Biaggi  
Director  
Nevada Department of Conservation and  
Natural Resources  
901 South Stewart Street, Suite 5001  
Richard H. Bryan Building  
Carson City, Nevada 89701

Subject: Cooperating Agency and Meeting Invitation - Walker River Basin Acquisitions  
Program Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Allen:

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) would like to extend an invitation to the Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) to be a Cooperating Agency to assist with preparation and review of the Walker River Acquisitions Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). We also invite DCNR to attend an EIS draft alternatives development meeting to be held on January 3, 2008. Information on that meeting is found below.

The purpose of the Acquisitions Program is to comply with the requirements of Public Law 109-103 which allocates funds to the University of Nevada to implement an environmental restoration program by acquiring from willing sellers land, water appurtenant to the land, and related interests in the Walker River Basin, Nevada. The goal of the acquisition program is to acquire water rights sufficient to increase inflows to Walker Lake up to an additional 50,000 acre-feet per year above historical average flows.

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Reclamation is holding a meeting with Cooperating Agencies to draft alternatives for the EIS on January 3, 2008 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at our office at 705 North Plaza Street, Room 320, Carson City, Nevada. We request that you notify us in writing of your decision to be a Cooperating Agency on the EIS. Please also let us know if you intend to attend the January 3, 2008 EIS meeting. If you have any questions on the EIS or the meeting, call Caryn Hunt DeCarlo, EIS Project Lead, at (775) 884-8352.

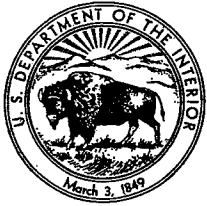
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Betsy Rieke".

Elizabeth Ann Rieke  
Area Manager

cc: Mr. Russ Grimes  
Jones and Stokes  
2600 V Street  
Sacramento, California 95818





# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION  
Lahontan Basin Area Office  
705 N. Plaza Street, Rm 320  
Carson City, NV 89701

IN REPLY REFER TO:

December 14, 2007

LO-650  
ENV-6.00

Mr. Ken Mayer  
Director  
Nevada Department of Wildlife  
1100 Valley Road  
Reno, Nevada 89512

Subject: Cooperating Agency and Meeting Invitation - Walker River Basin Acquisitions  
Program Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Mr. <sup>Ken</sup>~~Mayer~~:

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) would like to extend an invitation to the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) to be a Cooperating Agency to assist with preparation and review of the Walker River Acquisitions Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). We also invite NDOW to attend an EIS draft alternatives development meeting to be held on January 3, 2008. Information on that meeting is found below.

The purpose of the Acquisitions Program is to comply with the requirements of Public Law 109-103 which allocates funds to the University of Nevada to implement an environmental restoration program by acquiring from willing sellers land, water appurtenant to the land, and related interests in the Walker River Basin, Nevada. The goal of the acquisition program is to acquire water rights sufficient to increase inflows to Walker Lake up to an additional 50,000 acre-feet per year above historical average flows.

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Cooperating Agency on the EIS. Please also let us know if you intend to attend the January 3, 2008 EIS meeting. If you have any questions on the EIS or the meeting, call Caryn Hunt DeCarlo, EIS Project Lead, at (775) 884-8352.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Betsy Rieke". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Elizabeth Ann Rieke  
Area Manager

cc: Mr. Russ Grimes  
Jones and Stokes  
2600 V Street  
Sacramento, California 95818







# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

Lahontan Basin Area Office  
705 N. Plaza Street, Rm 320  
Carson City, NV 89701

IN REPLY REFER TO:

December 14, 2007

LO-650  
ENV-6.00

Mr. Robert Williams  
Field Supervisor  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
1340 Financial Blvd., Suite 234  
Reno, Nevada 89502

Subject: Cooperating Agency and Meeting Invitation - Walker River Basin Acquisitions  
Program Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Bob:

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) would like to extend an invitation to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to be a Cooperating Agency to assist with preparation and review of the Walker River Acquisitions Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). We also invite FWS to attend an EIS draft alternatives development meeting to be held on January 3, 2008. Information on that meeting is found below.

The purpose of the Acquisitions Program is to comply with the requirements of Public Law 109-103 which allocates funds to the University of Nevada to implement an environmental restoration program by acquiring from willing sellers land, water appurtenant to the land, and related interests in the Walker River Basin, Nevada. The goal of the acquisition program is to acquire water rights sufficient to increase inflows to Walker Lake up to an additional 50,000 acre-feet per year above historical average flows.

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Reclamation is holding a meeting with Cooperating Agencies to draft alternatives for the EIS on January 3, 2008 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at our office at 705 North Plaza Street, Room 320, Carson City, Nevada. We request that you notify us in writing of your decision to be a

Cooperating Agency on the EIS. Please also let us know if you intend to attend the January 3, 2008 EIS meeting. If you have any questions on the EIS or the meeting, call Caryn Hunt DeCarlo, EIS Project Lead, at (775) 884-8352.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth Rieke". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Elizabeth Ann Rieke  
Area Manager

cc: ~~Mr. Russ Grimes~~  
Jones and Stokes  
2600 V Street  
Sacramento, California 95818

Ms. Lisa Heki  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
1340 Financial Blvd., Suite 234  
Reno, Nevada 89502

Ms. Selena Werdon  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
1340 Financial Blvd., Suite 234  
Reno, Nevada 89502





## United States Department of the Interior

### BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

Lahontan Basin Area Office  
705 N. Plaza Street, Rm 320  
Carson City, NV 89701

IN REPLY REFER TO:

December 14, 2007

LO-650  
ENV-6.00

Mr. Kenneth Spooner  
General Manager  
Walker River Irrigation District  
P. O. Box 820  
Yerington, Nevada 89447

Subject: Cooperating Agency and Meeting Invitation - Walker River Basin Acquisitions  
Program Environmental Impact Statement

Dear <sup>Ken</sup>~~Kenneth~~:

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) would like to extend an invitation to the Walker River Irrigation District (District) to be a Cooperating Agency to assist with preparation and review of the Walker River Acquisitions Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). We also invite the District to attend an EIS draft alternatives development meeting to be held on January 3, 2008. Information on that meeting is found below.

The purpose of the Acquisitions Program is to comply with the requirements of Public Law 109-103 which allocates funds to the University of Nevada to implement an environmental restoration program by acquiring from willing sellers land, water appurtenant to the land, and related interests in the Walker River Basin, Nevada. The goal of the acquisition program is to acquire water rights sufficient to increase inflows to Walker Lake up to an additional 50,000 acre-feet per year above historical average flows.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Betsy Rieke". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Elizabeth Ann Rieke  
Area Manager

cc: Mr. Russ Grimes  
Jones and Stokes  
2600 V Street  
Sacramento, California 95818







# United States Department of the Interior

**BUREAU OF RECLAMATION**  
Lahontan Basin Area Office  
705 N. Plaza Street, Rm 320  
Carson City, NV 89701

IN REPLY REFER TO:

December 14, 2007

LO-650  
ENV-6.00

Mr. Vince Conway  
Chairman  
Yerington Paiute Tribe  
171 Campbell Lane  
Yerington, Nevada 89447

Subject: Cooperating Agency and Meeting Invitation - Walker River Basin Acquisitions  
Program Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Mr. Conway:

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) would like to extend an invitation to the Yerington Paiute Tribe (Tribe) to be a Cooperating Agency to assist with preparation and review of the Walker River Acquisitions Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). We also invite the Tribe to attend an EIS draft alternatives development meeting to be held on January 3, 2008. Information on that meeting is found below.

The purpose of the Acquisitions Program is to comply with the requirements of Public Law 109-103 which allocates funds to the University of Nevada to implement an environmental restoration program by acquiring from willing sellers land, water appurtenant to the land, and related interests in the Walker River Basin, Nevada. The goal of the acquisition program is to acquire water rights sufficient to increase inflows to Walker Lake up to an additional 50,000 acre-feet per year above historical average flows.

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Reclamation is holding a meeting with Cooperating Agencies to draft alternatives for the EIS on January 3, 2008 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at our office at 705 North Plaza Street, Room 320, Carson City, Nevada. We request that you notify us in writing of your decision to be a

Cooperating Agency on the EIS. Please also let us know if you intend to attend the January 3, 2008 EIS meeting. If you have any questions on the EIS or the meeting, call Caryn Hunt DeCarlo, EIS Project Lead, at (775) 884-8352.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Betsy Rieke". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Betsy" and last name "Rieke" clearly distinguishable.

Elizabeth Ann Rieke  
Area Manager

cc: Mr. Russ Grimes  
Jones and Stokes  
2600 V Street  
Sacramento, California 95818

Mr. Duane Masters  
Environmental Manager  
603 West Bridge Street  
Yerington, Nevada 89447



## **Responses to Invitation Letters**





# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS  
WESTERN NEVADA AGENCY  
311 East Washington Street  
Carson City, Nevada 89701



IN REPLY REFER TO:

Superintendent

FEB 06 2008

Betsy Rieke, Area Manager  
Attention: Caryn Hunt DeCarlo, EIS Project Lead  
Bureau of Reclamation  
705 North Plaza  
Carson City, Nevada 89701

Dear Ms. Rieke:

In response to your letter of December 14, 2007, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Western Nevada Agency (WNA) accepts the Bureau of Reclamation's (Reclamation) invitation to participate as a cooperating agency in the development of the Walker River Basin Acquisitions Program Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The BIA will also participate in Reclamation's EIS alternatives development meeting rescheduled for January 31, 2008 (originally January 3, 2008). The BIA is particularly interested in potential impacts to trust resources within the Yerington Indian Reservation and Colony and Walker River Indian Reservation in Lyon and Mineral Counties, Nevada, as well as the operation of Weber Dam and Reservoir.

The BIA has expertise in the NEPA process and, relative to this initiative, expects to participate fully in the development of alternatives, technical meetings (particularly endangered species, water resources, and trust resources), and document review and other elements.

The primary BIA point of contact for this project will be Mr. Tom Strekal, Regional Fish and Wildlife Biologist at 775-887-3505; and Steve Brown, Chief of Natural Resources Branch at 775-887-3550. Both Messrs. Strekal and Brown are stationed at WNA; the office fax number is 775-887-3531.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this important project.

Sincerely,

Superintendent



JIM GIBBONS  
*Governor*

STATE OF NEVADA  
**DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE**

1100 Valley Road  
Reno, Nevada 89512  
(775) 688-1500 • Fax (775) 688-1595

KENNETH E. MAYER  
*Director*

DOUG HUNT  
*Deputy Director*

January 30, 2008

Bureau of Reclamation  
Lahontan Basin Area Office  
705. N. Plaza, Room 320  
Carson City, NV 89701  
**ATTN: Caryn Hunt DeCarlo**

Dear Ms. DeCarlo:

Please be advised that the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) is pleased to participate as a Cooperating Agency during the development of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Walker River Basin Acquisition Program. I am confident that members of our staff have knowledge and experience that will prove to be valuable in the development of this very important document. Elmer Bull, Habitat Staff Specialist, will serve as NDOW's representative for the EIS team.

If you require further assistance, please don't hesitate to contact Elmer at (775) 463-7816 or [ebull@ndow.org](mailto:ebull@ndow.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kenneth E. Mayer".

Kenneth E. Mayer, Director  
Nevada Department of Wildlife





**Daniel J. Klaich**  
**Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief Counsel**  
**Nevada System of Higher Education**

2601 Enterprise Rd. 5550 W. Flamingo Rd., Ste. C-1  
Reno, NV 89512 Las Vegas, NV 89103  
Phone: (775) 784-4901 Phone: (702) 889-8426  
Fax: (775) 784-6520 Fax: (702) 889-8492

January 18, 2008

Betsy Rieke, Area Manager  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Lahontan Basin Area Office  
PO Box 640  
Carson City NV 89702-0640

Dear Ms. Rieke,

The Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) has agreed to be a Cooperating Agency on the Walker River Basin Acquisitions Program Environmental Impact Statement.

The NSHE believes the special expertise we can provide to the research includes our extensive ongoing research on Walker River Basin issues. We also believe we have jurisdiction for this project related to mandates in Section 208 of Public Law 109-103.

Karen Grillo will be our contact person for the System and can be reached at 775-721-3789.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Klaich,  
Executive Vice Chancellor



## United States Department of the Interior

### FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office

1340 Financial Blvd., Suite 234

Reno, Nevada 89502

Ph: (775) 861-6300 ~ Fax: (775) 861-6301



February 5, 2008

File No. 2008-FA-0079

#### Memorandum

COPY

To: Manager, Resource Management Division, Bureau of Reclamation-Lahontan  
Basin Area Office, Carson City, Nevada

From: Field Supervisor, Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office

Subject: Cooperating Agency Status for Walker River Basin Acquisitions Program  
Environmental Impact Statement

This responds to your January 15, 2008 letter requesting written notification of our decision to be a Cooperator in the preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Walker River Basin Acquisitions Program.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has jurisdiction by law and special expertise concerning environmental issues pertinent to the proposed action. Therefore, we agree to participate as a Cooperating Agency. We understand that our role as a Cooperating Agency typically may involve developing and providing technical information for the EIS.

The Service will be represented by Steve Caicco, who will provide technical assistance on general biological impact assessment and Lisa Heki, who will provide technical assistance on fisheries and fish habitat. Please ensure that Lisa Heki and Selena Werdon continue to receive all correspondence regarding this project.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact me, Steve Caicco, or Lisa Heki at (775) 861-6300.

Robert D. Williams

TAKE PRIDE  
IN AMERICA



# BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

## LYON COUNTY ♦ NEVADA

27 SOUTH MAIN STREET ♦ YERINGTON ♦ NEVADA 89447

(775) 463-6531

FROM OTHER AREAS OF THE COUNTY

(775) 577-5037

FAX: (775) 463-6533

LEROY GOODMAN

PHYLLIS HUNEWILL

LARRY MCPHERSON

BOB MILZ

DON H. TIBBALS

DENNIS STARK  
COUNTY MANAGER

December 27, 2007

COPY

United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Lahontan Basin Area Office  
705 North Plaza, Rm 320  
Carson City, Nevada 89701

Dear Ms. Elizabeth Ann Reike:

This is in response to your letter dated December 14, 2007, re: Cooperating Agency and Meeting Invitation-Walker River Basin Acquisitions Program Environmental Impact Statement.

As to the invitation to be a Cooperating Agency to assist with preparation review of the Walker River Acquisitions Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) we must respectfully decline. However, Lyon County would appreciate some involvement as well as being kept apprised of any further developments in this matter.

Due to conflicting schedules, as we hold our Board of Commissioners meetings on the first and third Thursdays of each month, we will not be able to attend the meeting on January 3, 2008 at your office in Carson City, Nevada.

Please accept this as our official notice, per your request. If you have any further question or inquiries, please call this office at (775) 463-6531.

Respectfully,

Dennis W. Stark  
Lyon County Manager

CC: Lyon County Board of Commissioners

Sent via fax and US Mail

Feb 19 08 01:44p

P. 2

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS****LYON COUNTY • NEVADA**

27 SOUTH MAIN STREET • YERINGTON • NEVADA 89447

(775) 463-6531

FROM OTHER AREAS OF THE COUNTY

(775) 577-5037

FAX: (775) 463-6533

LEROY GOODMAN  
PHYLLIS HUNEWILL  
LARRY MCPHERSON  
BOB MILZ  
DON H. TIBBALS

DENNIS STARK  
COUNTY MANAGER

February 19, 2008

United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Lahontan Basin Area Office  
705 North Plaza, Rm 320  
Carson City, Nevada 89701

Dear Ms. Elizabeth Ann Reike:

This is in response to our phone conversation on February 14th, 2008, re: Cooperating Agency and Meeting Invitation-Walker River Basin Acquisitions Program Environmental Impact Statement. I would like to take the time to thank you for your explanation and clarification of the process, as well as a better definition of the term "Cooperating Agency". Our conversation was very helpful.

As to the invitation to be a Cooperating Agency to assist with preparation review of the Walker River Acquisitions Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), we have re-evaluated our position and accept inclusion into the group. Lyon County would appreciate involvement as a Cooperating Agency, as well as being kept apprised of further developments in this matter.

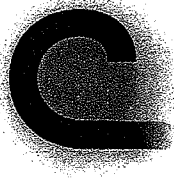
The County holds our Board of Commissioners, meetings on the first and third Thursdays of each month. We will attempt to make subsequent meetings of your group and will try to accommodate future schedules with representation from the County.

Please accept this as our official notice, per our phone conversation. If you have any further questions or inquiries please call this office at (775) 463-6531.

Respectfully,

Dennis W. Stark  
Lyon County Manager

CC: Lyon County Board of Commissioners  
Sent via fax and US Mail



**Mason Valley Conservation District**

215 W Bridge St Suite 11A TEL: (775) 463-2265 EXT 106  
Yerington NV 89447 FAX: (775) 463-3780

January 24, 2008

Terri Edwards  
Resource Division Manager  
Bureau of Reclamation  
705 N Plaza Street Room 320  
Carson City NV 89701

**Subject: Cooperating Agency Meeting Invitation – Walker River Basin Acquisitions  
Program Environmental Impact Statement**

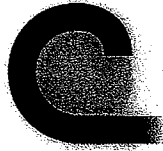
Dear Ms. Edwards:

On January 16, 2008; Mason Valley Conservation District (MVCD) voted to accept the invitation to be a Cooperating Agency on the Walker River Acquisitions Program Environmental Impact Statement. David Fulstone II MVCD Chairman and I will attend. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Michelle Langsdorf  
District Manager  
Mason Valley Conservation District

cc: Caryn Hunt DeCarlo  
EIS Project Lead  
Bureau of Reclamation  
705 N Plaza Street Room 320  
Carson City NV 89701



**Mason and Smith Valley  
Conservation Districts**

215 W Bridge St Suite 11A TEL: (775) 463-2265 EXT 106  
Yerington NV 89447 FAX: (775) 463-3780

December 19, 2007

Caryn Hunt DeCarlo  
Bureau of Reclamation  
705 N Plaza St Rm 230  
Carson City NV 89701

Subject: LO-650 ENV-6.00 Cooperating Agency and Meeting Invitation – Walker River  
Basin Acquisitions Program Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Ms. DeCarlo

On behalf of Mason and Smith Valley Conservation Districts (Districts), I would like to thank you for the invitation to be a Cooperating Agency to assist with preparation and review of the Walker River Acquisitions Environmental Impact Statement (EIS); however, at this time the Districts are unable to accept or decline the offer. As political subdivisions of state government, Districts are required to follow State of Nevada Open Meeting Law regulations. A decision must be made by each District's Board of Supervisors at a properly notified public meeting. Due to the holidays and limited time between now and meeting date of January 3, 2008, the Districts will be unable to comply with these regulations. Each District will discuss this matter during their scheduled meetings in January. Mason Valley Conservation District will meet January 16, 2008 at 7:00 a.m. and Smith Valley Conservation District will meet January 16, 2008 at noon. After which, I will notify your office of their decisions.

If further clarification is needed, please do not hesitate to contact me at (775) 463-2265 x 106 or by email [michelle.langsdorf@nv.nacdnet.net](mailto:michelle.langsdorf@nv.nacdnet.net).

Sincerely,

Michelle Langsdorf  
District Manager  
Mason and Smith Valley Conservation Districts

# Board of MINERAL COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



ED FOWLER, CHAIRMAN

JERRIE C. TIPTON, Vice-Chairman

RICHARD BRYANT, Member

Telephone: 775-945-2446  
FAX 775-945-0706  
P.O. Box 1450  
Hawthorne, Nevada 89415

GOVERNING BOARD FOR THE TOWNS OF  
HAWTHORNE, WALKER LAKE, LUNING  
AND MINA  
LIQUOR BOARD AND GAMING BOARD

January 23, 2008

Terri Edwards  
Resource Division Manager  
Bureau of Reclamation, USDI  
Lahontan Basin Area Office  
705 N. Plaza Street, Rm. 320  
Carson City, NV 89701

Ms. Edwards:

Mineral County appreciates the opportunity to be included as a Cooperating Agency to assist with the preparation and review of the Walker River Acquisitions Program EIS.

One of my 'duties' as a Mineral County Commissioner is to be the County's liaison with other governmental agencies. Therefore, I will be attending the meeting scheduled on the 31<sup>st</sup> of January, 2008 at your office in Carson City, Nevada.

The contact information you have for Mineral County should be:

Mineral County Commissioners  
PO Box 1450  
Hawthorne, NV 89415

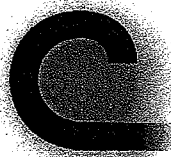
775-945-2446 telephone  
775-945-0706 FAX

Or to send directly to me:

Jerrie Tipton  
PO Box 138  
Mina, Nv 89422

775-482-4053  
775-573-2327 Fax

Jerrie Tipton  
Vice-Chair  
Board of Mineral County Commissioners



## Smith Valley Conservation District

215 W Bridge St Suite 11A TEL: (775) 463-2265 EXT 106  
Yerington NV 89447 FAX: (775) 463-3780

January 24, 2008

Terri Edwards  
Resource Division Manager  
Bureau of Reclamation  
705 N Plaza Street Room 320  
Carson City NV 89701

Subject: Cooperating Agency Meeting Invitation – Walker River Basin Acquisitions  
Program Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Ms. Edwards:

This is in response to your letter dated January 15, 2008 inviting Smith Valley Conservation District (SVCD) to become a Cooperating Agency on the Walker River Basin Acquisitions Program EIS and attend the Cooperating Agency meeting scheduled for January 31, 2008.

Neither letter (dated December 14, 2007 or January 15, 2008) sent by the Bureau of Reclamation clearly defines the role of a Cooperating Agency. With this in mind, SVCD is unable to accept or decline the invitation. SVCD would like to participate in the meeting scheduled for January 31, 2008 to gain the necessary information to make an informed decision regarding our role in the program. SVCD will then discuss this matter at their meeting scheduled for February 20, 2008.

Sincerely,

Michelle Langsdorf  
District Manager  
Mason Valley Conservation District

cc: Caryn Hunt DeCarlo  
EIS Project Lead  
Bureau of Reclamation  
705 N Plaza Street Room 320  
Carson City NV 89701



ALLEN BIAGGI  
Director

JIM GIBBONS  
Governor

KAY SCHERER  
Deputy Director

State of Nevada  
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources  
Office of the Director  
Richard H. Bryan Building  
901 S. Stewart Street, Suite 5001  
Carson City, Nevada 89701  
Telephone (775) 684-2700  
Facsimile (775) 684-2715  
www.dcnr.nv.gov



Division of Conservation Districts  
Division of Environmental Protection  
Division of Forestry  
Division of State Lands  
Division of State Parks  
Division of Water Resources  
Natural Heritage Program  
Wild Horse Program

STATE OF NEVADA  
**Department of Conservation and Natural Resources**  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

December 19, 2007

Ms. Betsy Rieke  
Area Manager  
Bureau of Reclamation  
705 N. Plaza Street, Room 320  
Carson City, Nevada 89701

COPY

Subject: Cooperating Agency Status

Dear Betsy:

Thank you for your letter dated December 17, 2007 requesting Cooperating Agency status for the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources on the Walker River Acquisitions Environmental Impact Statement.

As you know, the Department maintains a number of state authorized regulatory programs including water quality, air quality and water allocation just to name a few. It has been the long standing policy of the Department to not participate in the NEPA process as a Cooperating Entity due to potential conflicts with our regulatory responsibilities.

With that said, the Department would be pleased to provide information and participate in the process in any other way in order to ensure the environmental documents are as complete and as comprehensive as possible.

Have a wonderful holiday season!

Sincerely,

  
Allen Biaggi  
Director

cc: Kay Scherer, Deputy Director  
Department Administrators



# Walker River Irrigation District

Established in 1919

---

December 19, 2007

Bureau of Reclamation  
Lahontan Basin Area Office  
705 N. Plaza Street, Rm. 320  
Carson City, NV 89701

Attn: Elizabeth Ann Rieke  
Area Manager

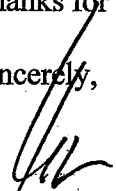
Subject: Cooperation Agency and Meeting Invitation – Walker River Basin  
Acquisitions Program Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Betsy,

In reference to your letter dated December 14, 2007, the WRID Board of Directors will consider being a Cooperating Agency to assist with preparation and review of the Walker River Acquisitions EIS at their next monthly meeting on January 7, 2008.

Thanks for the heads up. We will be in touch.

Sincerely,

  
KENNETH C. SPOONER  
General Manager



# Walker River Irrigation District

Established in 1919

COPY

9 January 2008

Bureau of Reclamation  
Lahontan Basin Area Office  
705 N. Plaza Street, Rm. 320  
Carson City, NV. 89701

Attn: Elizabeth Ann Reike  
Area Manager

Dear Betsy,

Walker River Irrigation District [WRID] has elected to become a Cooperating Agency in assisting with preparation and review of the Walker River Acquisitions EIS. Please include this office in all notices and mailings relative to the process.

Sincerely,

  
Kenneth C. Spooner  
General Manager





## United States Department of the Interior

### BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

Lahontan Basin Area Office  
705 N. Plaza Street, Rm 320  
Carson City, NV 89701

IN REPLY REFER TO:

December 14, 2007

LO-650  
ENV-6.00

Ms. Genia Williams  
Chairperson  
Walker River Paiute Tribe  
P. O. Box 220  
Schurz, Nevada 89427

Subject: Cooperating Agency and Meeting Invitation - Walker River Basin Acquisitions  
Program Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Genia:

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) would like to extend an invitation to the Walker River Paiute Tribe (Tribe) to be a Cooperating Agency to assist with preparation and review of the Walker River Acquisitions Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). We also invite the Tribe to attend an EIS draft alternatives development meeting to be held on January 3, 2008. Information on that meeting is found below.

The purpose of the Acquisitions Program is to comply with the requirements of Public Law 109-103 which allocates funds to the University of Nevada to implement an environmental restoration program by acquiring from willing sellers land, water appurtenant to the land, and related interests in the Walker River Basin, Nevada. The goal of the acquisition program is to acquire water rights sufficient to increase inflows to Walker Lake up to an additional 50,000 acre-feet per year above historical average flows.

Federal and non-federal agencies and tribes that have jurisdiction by law or have special expertise concerning pertinent environmental issues are invited to participate in the preparation of the EIS. The role of a Cooperating Agency typically involves providing and developing technical information for the EIS environmental analyses. If you elect not to be a Cooperating Agency, you will still have opportunities to be involved in the EIS process. Throughout that process, Reclamation will coordinate with, and seek comments from, all interested parties. Input to the process is welcome at any time.

Reclamation is holding a meeting with Cooperating Agencies to draft alternatives for the EIS on January 3, 2008 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at our office at 705 North Plaza Street, Room 320, Carson City, Nevada. We request that you notify us in writing of your decision to be a

Cooperating Agency on the EIS. Please also let us know if you intend to attend the January 3, 2008 EIS meeting. If you have any questions on the EIS or the meeting, call Caryn Hunt DeCarlo, EIS Project Lead, at (775) 884-8352.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Betsy Rieke". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Elizabeth Ann Rieke  
Area Manager

cc: Mr. Russ Grimes  
Jones and Stokes  
2600 V Street  
Sacramento, California 95818

Mr. Jon McMasters  
Walker River Paiute Tribe  
P. O. Box 220  
Schurz, Nevada 89427

Mr. Chad Williams  
Walker River Paiute Tribe  
P. O. Box 220  
Schurz, Nevada 89427

Mr. Wes William Jr.  
Walker River Paiute Tribe  
P. O. Box 220  
Schurz, Nevada 89427





## **Appendix D—Correspondence with Native American Tribes**





# United States Department of the Interior

**BUREAU OF RECLAMATION**  
Lahontan Basin Area Office  
705 N. Plaza Street, Rm. 320  
Carson City, NV 89701

IN REPLY REFER TO:

September 12, 2007

LO-450  
ENV-6.00

Ms. Charlotte Baker  
Chairperson  
Bridgeport Indian Colony  
P. O. Box 37  
Bridgeport, California 93517

**Subject: Request for Tribal Consultation Meeting and Notification of Public Scoping Meetings -  
Walker River Basin Acquisitions Program Environmental Impact Statement**

Dear Chairperson Baker:

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) is beginning preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Walker River Basin Acquisitions Program. We would like to initiate consultation on the Acquisitions Program with the Bridgeport Indian Colony (Colony). The purpose of the Acquisitions Program is to comply with the requirements of Public Law 107-171 (Desert Terminal Lakes Program), which sets aside funds to provide water to at-risk natural desert terminal lakes. Public Law 109-103 (follow-on legislation to Public Law 107-171) allocated funds to the University of Nevada to implement a program for environmental restoration by acquiring, from willing sellers, land, water appurtenant to the land, and related interests in the Walker River Basin, Nevada. No acquisitions will occur in California. The goal of the Acquisition Program is to acquire water rights sufficient to increase inflows to Walker Lake up to an additional 50,000 acre-feet per year above historical average flows.

## **Tribal Consultation:**

Reclamation would like to initiate consultation by meeting at the Bridgeport Indian Colony to discuss the Acquisitions Program and request your comments. The EIS Project Lead, Caryn Hunt DeCarlo, can be reached at (775) 884-8352. She will work with you to coordinate the meeting.

## **Scoping under the National Environmental Policy Act:**

In addition to this request for consultation, Reclamation will be inviting you to participate in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process as a Cooperating Agency to assist with the preparation and review of the EIS.

Four public scoping meetings for the Acquisition Program EIS have been scheduled as follows:

- October 22, 2007, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., Rancho San Rafael Park, Main Ranch House, 1595 N. Sierra Street, Reno, Nevada
- October 23, 2007, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., Yerington High School, gymnasium, 114 Pearl Street, Yerington, Nevada
- October 24, 2007, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., Mineral County Public Library, meeting room, 110 1st Street, Hawthorne, Nevada
- October 25, 2007, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., Bridgeport Memorial Hall, 73 N. School Street, Bridgeport, California

I look forward to your participation in the tribal consultation and public scoping meetings and in the development of the EIS.

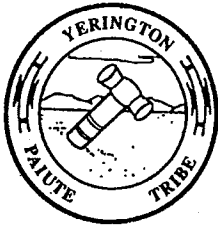
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Betsy Rieke". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Elizabeth Ann Rieke  
Area Manager

cc: Mr. Russ Grimes  
Jones and Stokes  
2600 V Street  
Sacramento, California 95818





**YERINGTON PAIUTE TRIBE**

171 Campbell Lane  
Yerington, Nevada 89447  
(775) 463-3301  
(775) 883-3895

Chairman  
Vince Conway

Vice-Chairman  
Elwood L. Emm

Member  
Louina Emm

Member  
Rita Bailey

Member  
Linda L. Howard

Member  
Marlene Brown

Member  
Reldon Hatch

Carmen Apodaca-Polizzi  
Tribal Manager

Secretary of Record  
Lindora Emm

December 27, 2007

Elizabeth Ann Rieke  
Area Manager  
United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Reclamation, Lahontan Basin Area Office  
705 N. Plaza St. Rm 320  
Carson City, NV

Ms Rieke:

We would like to express our interest in accepting the Bureau of Reclamation's invitation to become a Cooperating Agency to assist with the preparation and review of the Walker River Acquisitions EIS. Our Tribe will send two representatives, our Environmental Director and a technical consultant, to the meeting on January 3, 2008 at your offices in Carson City, NV.

If you have any questions or in the event of any change in schedule, please contact Duane Masters Sr., Environmental Director, at 775-463-7866, earth3@hughes.net in addition to my office at 775-463-3301.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Vince Conway".

Vince Conway, Tribal Chairman  
YERINGTON PAIUTE TRIBE

cc: Duane Masters Sr., Environmental Director  
Dietrick McGinnis, McGinnis & Associates LLC  
File

RECEIVED

DEC 30 2007

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION  
Lahontan Basin Area Office

CODE	PERSON RESP	INITIAL & DATE
100		12/31/07
101		
110		
400		
600		
800		
900		

COPY





## United States Department of the Interior

### BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

Lahontan Basin Area Office  
705 N. Plaza Street, Rm. 320  
Carson City, NV 89701

IN REPLY REFER TO:

September 12, 2007

LO-450  
ENV-6.00

Ms. Genia Williams  
Chairperson  
Walker River Paiute Tribe  
P. O. Box 220  
Schurz, Nevada 89427

Subject: Request for Tribal Consultation Meeting and Notification of Public Scoping Meetings -  
Walker River Basin Acquisitions Program Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Chairperson Williams:

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) is beginning preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Walker River Basin Acquisitions Program. We would like to initiate consultation on the Acquisitions Program with the Walker River Paiute Tribe (Tribe). The purpose of the Acquisitions Program is to comply with the requirements of Public Law 107-171 (Desert Terminal Lakes Program), to provide water to at-risk natural desert terminal lakes. Public Law 109-103 (follow-on legislation to Public Law 107-171) allocated funds to the University of Nevada to implement a program for environmental restoration by acquiring, from willing sellers, land, water appurtenant to the land, and related interests in the Walker River Basin, Nevada. The goal of the Acquisition Program is to acquire water rights sufficient to increase inflows to Walker Lake up to an additional 50,000 acre-feet per year above historical average flows.

#### **Tribal Consultation:**

Reclamation would like to initiate consultation with the Tribe by meeting at the Walker River Paiute Indian Reservation to discuss the Acquisitions Program and request your comments. We could either attend a Council meeting or have a separate meeting if preferred. The EIS Project Lead, Caryn Hunt DeCarlo, can be reached at (775) 884-8352. She will work with you to coordinate this meeting.

**Scoping under the National Environmental Policy Act:**

In addition to this request for consultation, Reclamation will be inviting you to participate in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process as a Cooperating Agency to assist with the preparation and review of the EIS.

Four public scoping meetings for the Acquisition Program EIS have been scheduled as follows:

- October 22, 2007, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., Rancho San Rafael Park, Main Ranch House, 1595 N. Sierra Street, Reno, Nevada
- October 23, 2007, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., Yerington High School, gymnasium, 114 Pearl Street, Yerington, Nevada
- October 24, 2007, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., Mineral County Public Library, meeting room, 110 1st Street, Hawthorne, Nevada
- October 25, 2007, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., Bridgeport Memorial Hall, 73 N. School Street, Bridgeport, California

I look forward to your participation in the tribal consultation and public scoping meetings and in the development of the EIS.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Ann Rieke  
Area Manager

cc: Mr. Tad Williams  
Environmental Director  
Walker River Paiute Tribe  
P. O. Box 220  
Schurz, Nevada 89427

Mr. Raymond Hoferer  
Cultural and Language Coordinator  
Walker River Paiute Tribe  
P. O. Box 220  
Schurz, Nevada 89427

Mr. Russ Grimes  
Jones and Stokes  
2600 V Street  
Sacramento, California 95818





# United States Department of the Interior

**BUREAU OF RECLAMATION**  
Lahontan Basin Area Office  
705 N. Plaza Street, Rm. 320  
Carson City, NV 89701

IN REPLY REFER TO:

September 12, 2007

LO-450  
ENV-6.00

Mr. Vince Conway  
Chairman  
Yerington Paiute Tribe  
171 Campbell Lane  
Yerington, Nevada 89447

Subject: Request for Tribal Consultation Meeting and Notification of Public Scoping Meetings -  
Walker River Basin Acquisitions Program Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Chairman Conway:

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) is beginning preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Walker River Basin Acquisitions Program. We would like to initiate consultation on the Acquisitions Program with the Yerington Paiute Tribe (Tribe). The purpose of the Acquisitions Program is to comply with the requirements of Public Law 107-171 (Desert Terminal Lakes Program), which sets aside funds to provide water to at-risk natural desert terminal lakes. Public Law 109-103 (follow-on legislation to Public Law 107-171) allocated funds to the University of Nevada to implement a program for environmental restoration by acquiring, from willing sellers, land, water appurtenant to the land, and related interests in the Walker River Basin, Nevada. The goal of the Acquisition Program is to acquire water rights sufficient to increase inflows to Walker Lake up to an additional 50,000 acre-feet per year above historical average flows.

## **Tribal Consultation:**

Reclamation would like to initiate consultation with the Tribe by meeting to discuss the Acquisitions Program and request your comments; we can meet in Yerington. The EIS Project Lead, Caryn Hunt DeCarlo, can be reached at (775) 884-8352. She will work with you to coordinate the meeting.

**Scoping under the National Environmental Policy Act:**

In addition to this request for consultation, Reclamation will be inviting you to participate in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process as a Cooperating Agency to assist with the preparation and review of the EIS.

Four public scoping meetings for the Acquisition Program EIS have been scheduled as follows:

- October 22, 2007, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., Rancho San Rafael Park, Main Ranch House, 1595 N. Sierra Street, Reno, Nevada
- October 23, 2007, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., Yerington High School, gymnasium, 114 Pearl Street, Yerington, NV
- October 24, 2007, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., Mineral County Public Library, meeting room, 110 1st Street, Hawthorne, Nevada
- October 25, 2007, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., Bridgeport Memorial Hall, 73 N. School Street, Bridgeport, California

I look forward to your participation in the tribal consultation and public scoping meetings and in the development of the EIS.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Ann Rieke  
Area Manager

cc: Mr. Duane Masters  
Environmental Manager  
603 West Bridge Street  
Yerington, Nevada 89447

Mr. Russ Grimes  
Jones and Stokes  
2600 V Street  
Sacramento, California 95818

